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MODERNITY AND THE CHURCHES

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BY

PERCY GARDNER, LITT.D.

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PREFACE

THE paper which gives its title to the present volume was the inaugural address to the Hibbert Summer School of Liberal Theology, held in Oxford in September 1909. I was urged to print the address, and at the suggestion of the publishers I have added to it some papers which I have in recent years, from time to time, read before various theological societies.

Thus the unity of the volume is not the unity of a planned treatise, but only such as is derived from the dominance of a point of view. Nevertheless, the papers fit into one another better than I expected. Occasionally there are certainly overlappings, and even repetitions, but these are no serious disadvantages. These papers are contributions, slight

and scattered—how slight no one knows better than myself—containing such suggestions as I have been able to make, in the leisure left by other duties, towards the solution of one of the most serious problems of our times, the reconstruction of Christian theology in accordance with the intellectual tendencies of the age.

I have been allowed to reprint two papers (VI. and IX.) already published.

PERCY GARDNER.

Oxford, *October* 1909.

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I

MODERNITY AND THE CHURCHES

In trying to give some account of what seem to me the new modes of regarding religion which belong to the new century, I shall certainly make no attempt to describe *all* the new forces and tendencies working in religion in our day. For example, one may see a great deal of the influence on religion of democracy and socialism. The tendency of these seems to be to diminish the other-worldliness of Christianity, and to consider mainly its relations to the communities of men engaged in mundane pursuits. We may also observe in almost all branches of the Church a tendency towards unity. In Scotland several religious bodies have been able to unite together, and

the same process is going on in the Colonies. Since the Pan-Anglican Synod we even see a tendency to approximation between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. Of such social movements and changes I shall say nothing. I shall speak only of modern *intellectual* influences which affect religion, nor indeed of all even of these, but chiefly of those tendencies which are summed up in the term Modernism, or as I should prefer to call it Modernity.

The term Modernism is, like almost all such terms, invented by the enemies of the tendency which the term implies. But since there is nothing offensive in it, there is no reason why we should not, for convenience, adopt it. Modernism in the Roman Church is a recognised tendency; and we owe to the Curia a very able paper in which its nature and purposes are set forth, and held up to the execration of the faithful. It may be that the authors of that document have represented as a system the views of a variety of heretics,

and that no one theologian holds in its entirety the whole scheme so neatly dovetailed together. But however that be, it is certain that most of the views condemned in the encyclical *Pascendi* are in substance now held by priests of the Roman Church. What is perhaps less generally recognised is that views parallel to, if not identical with, those condemned by the Pope are to be found among the exponents of religion in all branches of the Christian Church, though as yet they more often exist in an undeveloped than in a developed form.

Modern tendency in theology seems to be made up of two strands: a movement in history, and a movement in psychology. The precise connection of the two is hard to determine; but that they are sometimes united in the same person, and that they belong to the same phases of modern life, is certain. The historical movement is old, and has been in progress for centuries. The psychological movement is new: indeed, its

very existence is in many quarters scarcely recognised. It is my belief that whereas, taken by itself, the historic movement tends to scepticism and negation, the psychologic movement acts as a corrective, and offers to religious belief and practice a new and invaluable harbour of refuge. But I must explain. And I will first speak of the historic side of Modernism.

I

Long ago, Auguste Comte taught that the various sciences, natural and human, are to be arranged in a hierarchic or progressive series, according to their complexity, and that the process of complete methodising spreads as time goes on gradually from the simpler to the more complex. Astronomy is, of all sciences which have to do with concrete fact, the simplest. The planets and comets in their motions proceed according to definite laws which are to be made out by observation and calculation, and which are followed by

the heavenly bodies with perfect exactness. Of all the wonders recorded in the Old Testament (I may in illustration observe) the still-standing of sun and moon at the command of Joshua strikes a modern mind as most incongruous and impossible. As we proceed from physical to biological sciences, and from the latter to human and sociological studies, we find greater and greater complexity; but by slow degrees, Comte observed, one field of study after another is recognised as a province of the realm of law, and caprice, whether human or divine, is shut out. I say caprice; for to deny Divine action in nature is another thing.

Comte was one of the greatest generalisers that the world has seen. And there can be no doubt that the course of thought has in general, since he wrote, moved in the direction which he indicated. We have recently been celebrating the centenary of the man who did more than anyone in his generation to prove the reign of law in the development of plants

and animals. And some of the contemporaries of Darwin have quite changed our way of looking at history. "History," wrote Macaulay in 1828, "is a compound of poetry and philosophy"; and he speaks of these as "the two hostile elements." That seems to us a most astonishing statement. History is everywhere now recognised, though less in England than on the Continent, as a branch of science—a field in which the play of cause and effect, of biological and sociological evolution, may be clearly seen. The heroic theory that history is made by great men is receding more and more into the background. Their influence cannot be denied; but we see that the great men themselves often owe almost everything to the fact that they float on a wave of tendency. The respect for fact—fact naked and unadorned—has spread from the physical sciences into the historic, and has been fostered and furthered by the archæologic and geographic and anthropologic researches which are now regarded

as among the chief means for the recovery of past history.

All this is sufficiently familiar, and I feel almost disposed to apologise for setting it forth. But it is necessary to do so, for the tendency of which I speak is one of the two sources of Modernism. When we look on the history and the documents of the Christian Church in this spirit, they completely change their character, and can no longer serve the purpose to which they were put by our ancestors. Christian theology has usually maintained, or assumed, that the books of the Church are books supernaturally inspired and not subject to criticism. It has usually held that the history of the Christian Church has been from the first a miraculous history, unique among human phenomena, not to be compared with the history of any other faith. It has, in a word, looked on Christianity as the absolute or perfect religion, while other religions are at most mere broken lights, only fit to cast their beams a few feet into surrounding darkness.

But of modern historic science the very essence is comparison. It will hold that, whether a religion be good or bad (a matter which it does not attempt to decide), the same laws will be observed in its working, and the same general course will be observed in its history. And it will insist on placing the sacred books of Christianity among other books, investigating the education and the purposes of the writers, discerning the limitations of their knowledge, and the temporary character of their ethics. Critics will analyse the books of the Bible from every point of view—philological, literary, cultural, archæological—and entirely set aside the traditions of the Church as to their authorship and meaning unless those traditions can produce evidence in their favour which will satisfy the keen eyes of the modern expert.

When, in the sixteenth century, the great revolt of the Teutonic races against the religious domination of Rome took place, it was not on points such as these that the great

Reformers broke away from the traditions of the Church. The Bible was freely cited by the controverters on both sides; but it was a Bible read without historic criticism, and in the judgment of the moderns utterly misunderstood. As regards the history of the Church, the early Protestants did, no doubt, do something to draw nearer to historic fact. But the great method of comparison and the great idea of evolution were as little understood by them as by their Roman opponents. They thought that truth had been definitely revealed to man, and committed to sacred books; and their only care was to work back to a primitive revelation which was no work of man, and which man had no right to question in any respect.

I need not attempt to trace the gradual rise of scientific Biblical criticism. At present its supremacy is, so far as words go, almost undisputed. All the Churches, or at least the more highly educated authorities in every Church, appeal to it with confidence, and main-

tain that, when used with wisdom and moderation, it supports the views which they hold. Even the Pope appoints a commission to reconsider the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch. The Moderates in our country are fond of speaking in disparaging terms of the results of extreme German criticism; but they would say that it is not the principles of criticism to which they object, but only to their application without wisdom and common sense. The court is recognised by all; but the various advocates have different interests to uphold. Loisy and Harnack, Sanday and Driver, Holtzmann and Van Manen, all claim to follow the most scientific methods of criticism, and to reach the results to which those methods lead.

The question naturally arises, Whence comes the great divergence in the results, when the starting-point is the same? It may be answered that there is a like divergence in the results reached by workers in many fields of science. There are schools in biology and even in

chemistry, as there are in Biblical criticism; and the quarrels of the schools are almost as keen in our academies and schools of science as they are in the theological world. This is true; but it is a very superficial account of the matter. Mere intellectual divergences are frequent among scientific researchers. But they seldom become keen and heated unless to the intellectual friction some opposition of a more personal and practical kind is added. The mere love of truth does not often set professors at loggerheads, unless there is added some personal rivalry, some national animosity, or some traditional jealousy. Now it must be allowed that in the field of theology there are other causes disposing to animosity besides the love of truth and personal rivalries. We have a new and strong element introduced which comes from the realm of conduct. A theologian is usually convinced that his views as to Biblical criticism and Church history are not only the most trustworthy from the scientific point of view, but also the most in

accord with a Christian life and the constitution of his Church.

I have put together in this aspect of things criticism of the Bible and views on Church history. In a sense, the former of these may be considered only a province of the latter, as the earliest Church history is contained in books of the Bible, and the relation of the Church to her sacred books is an important branch of her history. But yet it is important to maintain the distinction, in view of the attitude taken up by some Modernists, especially in France. These theologians are able to use the very freest hand in Biblical criticism, because they are convinced that the Church is a continuous and authorised guardian of theological truth, and that the appeal for such truth to the Bible is of less importance.

It is, however, difficult to put the infallibility of the Church in the place of Biblical infallibility. If the Church be infallible, her word has from the first maintained the infalli-

bility of Scripture. It is impossible altogether to invert the Protestant position, and to hold that Christianity started as a very fallible institution, but attained infallibility after the Apostolic age. This is, of course, not the view of the great leaders. Newman adhered to the view which attributes a continuous inspiration of the Church from first to last. And even Mr Tyrrell, in his recent utterances, speaks of the New Testament as a deposit of truth which can scarcely be tampered with by subsequent generations.

One sees, however, that a belief in the gradual consolidation of religious truth by the visible Church is only an exaggeration of the evolutional view of Christianity, which was first systematically brought forward by Newman in the middle of the last century, and which has now a strong hold upon thoughtful minds. That Christianity first appeared in the world in rudimentary form, as a grain of mustard seed, and gradually grew into a great plant of the same species, is a view which

attracts many, not only in the Roman Church; and one may fairly divide what may be called the evolutional schools of Church history into two classes, whereof one will dwell more on the continuity of life between seed and tree, and the predestined determination of the kind of tree by the seed, while the other school will make more of the outward conditions of soil and circumstance which externally limit and determine the manner of growth.

I need not, however, further speak of the spread and general acceptance of the methods of historic criticism as applied to Christian documents and history. As I have observed, in theory everyone agrees in this matter. What I am more anxious to draw your attention to is the limitations with which in the mind of every Christian teacher known to me the appeal to criticism is fenced.

It must be fairly clear to everyone that if the principle of comparison is carried to its utmost length, the resemblances between Christianity and other religions, especially

Buddhism, will appear so great and manifold that Christianity will cease to be in a class by itself, and be in danger of being lost in the crowd. If the extremely severe and sceptical methods of modern literary criticism are brought to bear on the Gospels and Epistles they will become a mere struggling-ground for an infinite variety of conjectures and theories, each of which is very formidable to its rivals, but wants power to establish itself in possession. If the history of the Church is treated in exactly the same cold and unprejudiced way in which the growth of purely secular institutions is regarded, we shall follow it without any of those emotional glows with which as Christians we cannot dispense. Our ideas as to Christianity need colour as well as form, warmth as well as light. In a word, a man's view of the origins and history of his own faith cannot have the completely even-handed simplicity which it might have if one were a learned Mohammedan or Buddhist. Are we to set down this frame of mind as

mere prejudice? This question is at least well worth asking; and I hope to furnish some kind of answer to it in treating of the other source of Modernism, the psychological.

II

Though the last intellectualist philosophy which has exercised great influence in Europe, that of Hegel, has still adherents, and still affects thought in England and Scotland, it is safe to say that its influence has diminished and is diminishing. Its place has been taken by a variety of other tendencies. The Roman Curia has harked back to the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, which has been put in a favoured position in the Roman Colleges. In Germany and France several varieties of Neo-Kantian thought have made their appearance. And Schopenhauer is still a considerable force. But the most significance for the future belongs to a way of thought which prevails in many schools, the chief character-

istic of which is a profound disbelief in the speculative faculty of the human intellect, and a growing emphasis laid on the practical and volitional side of man.

The tendency of religious thought in our day is to take its start, not from abstract propositions in regard to God and the spiritual world, nor to develop a scheme of theology out of sacred writings, but to begin with experience and the facts of human nature, searching out what they imply in regard to an overruling spiritual Power and our relation to it. Such books as William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* show the way in which theology is drifting, and at the same time tend to further the drift. They come to many with a force and appropriateness which is overpowering. Mr James himself has told me of the numerous letters which he has received from members of all Churches — Roman, Anglican, and Nonconformist—saying that he has met one of their most pressing needs, and placed for them religion in a position of greater

stability. It may be regarded as a new form of the argument from design. Since man has deeply seated in him a craving for what is spiritual, and needs which only religion can meet, this is a proof that he was born for faith, and that the world must be so arranged as to fit into human capacity in these respects.

It is not hard to see that if man's standpoint in religion be anthropocentric rather than theocentric, many of the most noteworthy features of modern religion follow naturally. For example, from this point of view one lays more stress on the immanence than on the transcendence of God, though one need not deny the Divine transcendence. And this is certainly a marked feature in many modern schools of religion. One is also disposed to lay more emphasis on the life of religion than on the creed, on organisation and discipline than on speculative thought. And thus there flows in upon all the Churches a stream of that very wide and deep tendency

of modern thought which goes by the name of *pragmatism.*

Of course the pragmatist tendency in thought has not sprung suddenly into being. Its origin may indeed be traced very far back. Even in Aristotle we may discern some reaction against the purely intellectualist views of Plato, which almost entirely neglect to take account of the will. The Neo-Platonists go further than Aristotle in appreciation of the volitional side of man. And modern philosophy, from its very origin in the brain of Descartes, is less intellectualist than was ancient. In Kant's *Critique of the Practical Reason* we have will and purpose much more fully appreciated as not less important in the human constitution than the cognitive faculties. Since Kant, philosophers have gone two ways in Germany. In one direction we have the purely idealist and intellectualist philosophies of Schelling and Hegel; in the other direction the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, in which will plays a

far greater part and the intellect a less part. The tendency of Comtism in France, and of the philosophies of Mill and Spencer in England, has been sharply to emphasise the limits placed by nature to the range of the human intellect, and to lay stress upon the ocean of the unknowable which on all sides bounds the narrow field of the knowable. From the contact of agnosticism, which has so widely spread among thoughtful men, with the ideas which have of late been flowing from the science of biology into the sphere of human science and of history, there has arisen a view of life which we may perhaps best call the pragmatist. No one person can be fairly credited with its origination; one may trace it showing through many recent works on philosophy, on history, on social science, on the theory of religion. It is in the air, and spreads like an infection from country to country and from school to school.

Pragmatism, like such principles generally, may be applied in two ways—in the indicative

and in the imperative mood. When used in the indicative, it asserts that man's practical faculties are primary in his constitution; that conduct and action are the main strands of the cord of life; that human beings are adapted rather to action than to speculation; that it is practical needs which are the mainspring of the human machine. When used in the imperative, it asserts that it is right, or at all events necessary, to govern action by these facts; that success will belong to those who rightly apprehend the essentially active character of man; that whatever meets and supplies his practical needs will certainly survive, and prove victorious over what merely seems satisfactory to the intelligence.

The real source of pragmatism lies in new views on psychology, and indeed on physiology. This is nowhere better expressed than in Professor William James's *Will to Believe.* He writes:[1] "Most physiologists tell us that every action whatever, even the most deliber-

[1] P. 113. I abridge.

ately weighed and calculated, does, so far as its organic conditions go, follow the reflex type. There is no one of those complicated performances in the convolutions of the brain to which our trains of thought correspond, which is not a mere middle term interposed between an incoming sensation that arouses it and an outgoing discharge of some sort, inhibitory if not exciting, to which it gives rise. The sensory impression exists only for the sake of awaking the central process of reflection, and the central process of reflection exists only for the sake of calling forth the final act. All action is thus reaction upon the outer world; and the middle stage of consideration or contemplation or thinking is only a place of transit, the bottom of a loop, both whose ends have their point of application in the outer world. The current of life which runs in at our eyes and ears is meant to run out at our hands, feet, or lips. The willing department of our nature, in short, dominates both the conceiving depart-

ment and the feeling department. I am sure I am not wrong in stating this result as one of the fundamental conclusions to which the entire drift of modern physiological investigation sweeps us."

It is hard to imagine any more complete upsetting than that wrought by the acceptance of the principle of pragmatism in our religious outlook. We have been accustomed to suppose that we accept religious doctrines and beliefs either in deference to the opinion of some recognised authority, or else because they are established by reason and argument. And we usually think that all people ought, if they were reasonable, to accept our views: the only grounds on which they reject them arise from prejudice and unreason, or perhaps from sheer perversity. But according to the pragmatist way of regarding things, this is to attribute far too great power to human intelligence, and greatly to underrate the part played in religion by emotion, by will, by life with all its hopes and fears, its purposes and

prejudices. Religious beliefs, doctrine and ritual, sacraments, even organisation, are the fruit of the tree, not its roots. The roots are religious ideas and tendencies which were framed for us by our ancestors in many generations, and which we absorbed with our mothers' milk, or even before we had arrived at an independent existence. When we are born we are not a blank sheet, but a sheet written all over in invisible characters which gradually become legible as we are exposed to the fire of life. We have (it is true) a certain power of self-modification—man is not an automaton—but such modification is but in a lesser degree the result of education and of reasoning: in a far greater degree it is the result of the resistances and buffetings of life itself—the fruit of hope and fear, of passion and disappointment, of friendship and love, of struggles for a livelihood and for self-development. The course of life modifies our primal ideas and tendencies, and hence come changes in our religious outlook, in our

beliefs and hopes, which far more fully express experience than reasoning, and character than logic.

The notion of absolute morality and of absolute truth has to go. In the place of it we have relative truth and relative morality: relative at best to the essentials of human nature, at the lowest to the features of nation or social group, or even of our individual selves.

When one tries to think out the results of this change of attitude, they may at first seem appalling in their scepticism. For it at once results from such a biological view of religion that no religion can possibly have succeeded unless it fitted into facts of human nature, and had in that way a certain relative truth. Thus religion may seem to be a matter of nationality, of circumstance, of temperament. It appears that in the history of Christianity just as in the evolution of animals and plants, those schools and forms of doctrine survived and were successful which were best suited to

the surrounding conditions, good, bad or indifferent; that heresies could only perish if they could not thrive amid their surroundings; that survival and success are the tests of religious truth; that faiths are to be judged, like policies, by the amount of consent with which they meet when referred to the people.

But the first impression of the immorality, or rather the moral indifference, of the pragmatist standard wears away when we consider certain aspects of it.

In the first place, it must be observed that if life offers no absolute test of religious truth, no more does intellect. If in the course of ages men had generally come to an agreement which religious beliefs were most reasonable, there would no doubt be a presumption of the truth of those beliefs. But the very contrary is the case. After all the controversy and wrangling of successive ages the differences of view among mankind as to the truth of all the fundamental principles of religion remain very much as they were. Indeed on most points,

such as the intervention of Providence in mundane affairs, the hope of a future life, the person of Jesus Christ, there is a far greater divergency of views among us than among our ancestors. Books on one side or the other of these great problems are constantly appearing; but they convince only those ready to be convinced, and make small impression on general belief. Any view more hopeless for the future than that of those who think that there is only one right way of religious thought, and that mankind can be argued into accepting that way, I confess myself unable to imagine. The tests of life and of results, however unsatisfactory, are at least more hopeful than this.

And further, though what we may call the biologic view of religion does, when accepted in a hasty and superficial fashion, seem to lead to indifference and scepticism, it may, when combined with a more lofty and spiritual outlook upon life, take another character.

If we are to judge the truth of religious beliefs by the tests of success and survival, we

must take a sufficiently broad and comprehensive view of history. The Christologic views of St Paul met with a very moderate degree of acceptance in his own time, and led him at last to a martyr's death at Rome. So far they seem to have been unsuccessful. But then consider the power which they have exercised in all ages in the Christian Church, how they have been a light and a leading to multitudes, and to the great teachers of the Church; how they have been rediscovered in successive periods by Augustine, by Anselm, by Luther, by Jansen. Is not the martyrdom of Paul made a splendid success by the history of Christianity, just as the martyrdom of Leonidas was made a splendid success by its effect on the morale of Sparta?

Or consider such an institution as monasticism. At first sight it seems condemned from the biological point of view, because it took away from society multitudes of the nobler and more unselfish natures, and prevented them from propagating their race. It lived by

absorbing some of the best blood of the community. And yet the historian, who considers how in an age of violence and rapine the monasteries protected the finer spirits of the race from destruction, and kept alive amid barbarous surroundings the dying embers of culture until they were again fanned into a flame by the fresh air of the Renaissance, the historian, I say, will be very rash if he decides that monasticism was not, on the whole, of great value to Europe. The people who in our day speak disparagingly of monasticism are not the historians, but the men in the street, who judge hastily that what under present conditions may lack sufficient justification (though even this may be disputed) could not have been justified by the circumstances of a past age. Their judgment is in the absolute, not the relative mood.

But the really critical question is whether the biologic test is accepted in conjunction with, and subject to, a belief in the Divine working in the world and a Divine control of

the course of history. This is a matter, in my opinion, as regards which intellect is comparatively indifferent. Good reasons may be given for maintaining and for denying such working and control. It is not from intellect, but from the experience of life acting in conjunction with a certain inner illumination, that a man comes to believe in them. If he does not believe in them, then, from the biological or pragmatist, as from any other point of view, the world will seem to move at random, and all religion to be an unproved hypothesis. But if he does accept them, then it will be perfectly natural for him to see Divine inspiration in fact of history as readily as the believers in the inspiration of Scripture see it in the Biblical setting forth of moral and spiritual truth.

In fact, the introduction of a pragmatic point of view into religious psychology has a strongly conservative effect. For whereas the intellectual surroundings and outlook vary greatly from generation to generation, man as

an emotional and conative being, as desiring and willing, does not greatly change, has not greatly changed in the whole course of history, cannot greatly change without ceasing to be man. Thus it is that in regard to religious needs and spiritual experience men of all ages are essentially alike: some of the Psalms appeal to us as if they were written yesterday, and the mental history of an Augustine or a Luther can never be uninteresting. It is on this broad basis of man as capable of religion and in need of religion that all the faiths are based. And it is to this permanent element in humanity that all the great religious teachers make their appeal. They have to use language which varies from age to age, but the religious feelings and the facts of conduct to which they appeal are fixed. And the relations between the individual and the spiritual environment remain permanent through all changes of civilisation. The great religious genius is steeped in the permanent, and he brings from heaven to earth a sense of the relation of man

to the unseen which is perpetuated by his adherents through generation after generation.

III

It may perhaps not readily appear why there should be any real connection between the more rigorous views of history of which I spoke at the beginning of this address and the pragmatist religious views which I have next discussed. The bond of connection is, however, I think quite clear. It lies in the modern feeling, one may almost say fanaticism, of the sacredness of fact. If history is to become, as it must become to the pragmatist, in a far greater degree than heretofore, the touchstone of good and evil in ethics, and even in beliefs, in rites, and in institutions, how infinitely important it becomes that we should learn what has really taken place in the past history of mankind! History is no longer to us a branch of humane letters, nor a mere subject of intellectual curiosity, but a

matter of the most vital moment. The lives of our ancestors are continuous with our own: we fight over again the battles by which they rose to a higher grade of existence; our hopes and fears are a repetition of their hopes and fears; the work which they began remains for us to carry on, and so accomplish the will of the great Spirit of the Universe. If so, it is impossible that we can too precisely know and too fully realise every detail of this past, for us so full of instruction and of encouragement.

Passing from history to psychology, we find the value of the fact no less overpowering. Our religious beliefs, the course of our politics, the nature of our institutions—all these are not so much to be argued out from first principles, or to be taken on authority, as to be determined by a careful consideration of the results of each of them in life, and their fruits of good or of evil.

It may be said that this is but the Utilitarian scheme of ethics. I should prefer to

hold that it goes in origin far behind the very modern school of Utilitarianism, and is implicitly taught in the great saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them." But really Pragmatism differs from Utilitarianism because it avoids the fatal flaws of the latter. The scheme of the Utilitarians is too individualist: it was the good of individuals rather than that of the society or the race which it made into the test of virtue. It was too intellectualist: it was content with determining the path of right, without seeking the stimulus which should lead men to pursue the right and avoid the wrong. And it was far too short-sighted, at least in origin, too much set on what was obviously and temporarily expedient: it did not take into account the long stretches of history and the essentially spiritual nature of man. In fact it originated with the jurist Bentham, and has never wholly lost the wig and gown of the lawyer.

IV

Let us, however, come back to our more immediate subject, modernism in religion. The Roman Modernists, treading in the footsteps of Newman, have discovered that pragmatism, combined with the doctrine of evolution, may be applied to justify the past history of their Church, and to support its continued inspiration. As a matter of fact, they maintain, the action of the Church in the past, in establishing a system, in setting up sacraments, in promulgating dogmas has been guided to meet existing circumstances. It has been the continued self-modification of an organism to adapt itself to changes in the surroundings. We may fully allow the validity, within certain limits, of the argument. It does not, however, reach to the support of the infallibility of the Church, but only proves that it has been a living institution suited for survival. But do we, it may fairly be said, see much of this historic plasticity in the present attitude

of the Roman Church? Is it not, on the contrary, maintaining an attitude of *non-possumus* towards the life, moral and intellectual, of the new age?

And on the other hand it is clear, though the Roman Modernists fail to see it, that the same argument from plasticity and survival may be used, not only in the case of Judaism and Islam (so far even Newman was ready to go), but by the adherents of all the other branches of the Christian Church. They too have changed and survived. The Eastern Church has kept alive, under Turkish tyranny, the Christian nationalities of Eastern Europe. The Reformed Churches came into being in consequence of the extreme corruption of the Western Church, which but for them and the reaction which they caused would probably have perished utterly. And these new branches of the Christian Society have flourished, and done a great work in north Europe and in America. They too can appeal to the test of fruits. The principle of prag-

matism, then, is by no means only fit for reception by the modern Romanists, but may be appealed to in a far wider circle.

Modern principles of criticism in regard to the Bible and early Church history are, it must be confessed, not easy to reconcile either with the fixed attitude of the Roman Church or with the beliefs which were adopted by the great Reformers, and which are still accepted by the great mass of Protestants. Their acceptance must needs compel Romans and Protestants alike to shift their ground. Those who judge on principles of Rationalism would naturally expect the change of view to be fatal to both schools of religion. But in fact they are only fatal to them when they proceed on the absolutist or intellectualist principle. When we accept pragmatist views of religion, religion becomes a thing so infinitely more elastic and adaptable that it easily survives the transplanting.

Take, for example, that doctrine which belongs to all really effective religions, the

doctrine of human sin and Divine forgiveness. It was one of the misfortunes of the early Christian Church that it took too literally the stories of the Jewish Scriptures. Thus it bound up the whole doctrine of sin with the historicity of the tale of Adam and Eve in Paradise, and regarded man's tendency to fall away from the Divine will as a consequence of the eating of the forbidden fruit. A few generations ago it was often regarded as an abandonment of Christianity if one rejected the early history in Genesis. But now almost everyone has come to see that one may carry historic criticism so far at least without giving up Christian teaching in regard to man's need of Divine mercy and pardon.

Or take one of the great doctrines which are more special to Christianity. The doctrine of the Incarnation, for instance, has been built upon an historical basis, upon a supposed miraculous event—the virgin birth—and has been supported by forming a sort of framework of passages of Scripture culled here and

there without regard to the authorship or the purpose of the treatises from which they are taken. Historic criticism begins by setting aside the miracle as practically without evidence, and proceeds to show that the passages of Scripture can only be understood in relation to the thought of the time. But when, instead of abandoning the doctrine of the Incarnation as refuted, we inquire why it arose in the early Church, and to what deep needs of human nature it stands related, we see that though it may need to be stated otherwise than in the terms of discredited history and misinterpreted Scripture, its roots go down into the depths of the nature of man as a conscious and spiritual being. It is a projection into a particular mental atmosphere of an eternal truth.

I might multiply examples, but these two will, I think, be sufficient to show that a pragmatist tendency is working in the Christian Churches, and practically serving as an antidote to the disintegration caused

by the spread of critical views as regards Scripture and history. It must be confessed that the process of reconstruction goes on but slowly. The Bishop of Birmingham says that he finds the traditional statements of Christian doctrine superior to any of the modern attempts to formulate it. In a measure he may be right. The formulation, to be successful, must come from thoroughly religious spirits, and emotion must contribute as well as thought. But the strongly and emotionally religious spirits have as yet scarcely been able to wean themselves from traditional views. It is because they are by nature strongly pragmatist that they are apt to regard the intellectual difficulties attaching to Christian creeds and doctrines as but a small matter in comparison with their emotional and practical efficiency. Probably they will not be driven from this point of view until they are convinced that a new formulation of beliefs is a pressing necessity. *That time is not far off.*

Meanwhile, in a period of transition, we may best work for the future by refusing to allow either element of religious progress to be thrust into the background. We must insist on a most critical examination of the literature and history of Christianity, using every new light of research and discovery. And we must at the same time never lose sight of the truth that religion is, after all, primarily a practical matter; that it is an interpretation of the relations between man and God, between human spirits and the infinite spiritual universe in which we live and move and have our being. These permanent relations do not depend upon any particular views in regard to history or philosophy. Yet life is continuous, and passes gradually from phase to phase; and we shall show a wisdom less than that of the mollusc if we entirely discard the shell of organisation and doctrine before we have a new shell ready, larger and more beautiful, and equally able to protect us against the hostile forces of the world.

In fact, we must keep ever before us the distinction, so essential, yet so frequently overlooked, between the *origin* of a belief, a custom, a religion, and its *value*. Into the origin we must inquire in the whitest of lights, with the aid of all the modern machinery of comparison and archæology. But when we have traced the origin, that is but one step. Those are quite mistaken, however many they be, who think that when we have traced the history of religion back to primitive beliefs, which no one now accepts, we have disposed of it. Our scientific task may be done, but the practical task remains. We have yet to consider the *value* of religion—whether it is good, and why. And if it be good, it would be absurd to reject it from any foolish rationalist scruple. We do not refuse to eat a ripe apple because when it was unripe it was suited only to those with more primitive digestions. We do not refuse to venture on a steamship, because it is developed in the long run out of the canoe of the savage.

In fact, we have to turn our minds in exactly the opposite direction; and because the best contemporary religion is of infinite value, and transposes into a higher key the whole of life, therefore every past phase of the history of religion acquires a glow of beauty and inspiration. We see the steps of the ladder by which men have mounted, and we see that had any one of them failed he would have fallen. That they did not fail can only be due to a supreme spiritual Power, who has led men up from rude beginnings, and has from time to time inspired sacred messengers to teach men what otherwise they could not have learned in regard to His own being.

II

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

No question is nearer to the centre of religion than that as to the nature of faith, since faith and religion are, in common parlance, almost convertible terms. This question I propose to take up, though my treatment of it must needs be brief and summary.

I must mention, only to reject them, two views as to the nature of faith most commonly received among us. The first is the intellectualist view which identifies religious faith with the acceptance of some particular creed or formula. The history of this view goes back very far. The roots of it are to be found in Greek philosophy, not in the religion of

Israel. Its rudiments can be traced in the Pauline Epistles; but it was not until creeds were formulated and heresy regarded as an intellectual error that it gained possession of the Church, which for ages it fully dominated. Though often rejected in words by English Christians, it is commonly received in fact. The second is what one may call the emotional view current in the Broad Church, that faith consists in loyalty of heart to a recognised spiritual authority. This is coming nearer to the truth, yet it is not satisfactory.

Both views have some justification, inasmuch as faith must always seek an utterance in formulæ which belong to the intellect, and faith must always give rise to, or be accompanied by, emotions of love and of loyalty. But we do not in either of these views reach the root. They are not psychologically satisfying. I think that in order to investigate the ultimate nature of faith I must proceed under three heads, and consider (1) the

nature of faith in general, (2) that of religious faith, (3) that of Christian faith.

I. FAITH IN GENERAL

In essence, faith is an active quality, an attitude of the spirit. I say of the spirit rather than of the will, because will has to do with action, and faith, although it usually has to do with action, may take form mainly in an enthusiasm of the spirit. In relation to experience, or the knowledge arising out of experience, faith stands as follows. It is based upon experience, but it goes beyond experience, and is subject to the control of experience. Since, however, abstract statements such as these are not easily converted into the current coin of thought, let us take examples of the exercise of faith, seeking them both in our relation to the physical world which surrounds us and in our relation to the human world of other selves.

In our action on the material world faith is often scarcely to be distinguished from know-

ledge. Indeed, without some degree of faith, knowledge as well as action would be impossible. We must have faith in the uniformity of nature and the constancy of the properties of iron and steam before we can make a machine or trust ourselves to a train or a steamship. For it has been frequently pointed out by philosophers that experience cannot guarantee the future. The fact that a thing has happened a thousand times does not prove that it will happen in the same way on the thousand and first occasion. A child may know by experience that he can float in water, yet it requires a perceptible exercise of faith before he can throw himself into the water in the certain hope of rising to the top.

But we have all become so fully accustomed to trust to uniform law in nature that it requires no great exertion of faith to enable us to act on the belief in natural law. If at any time we seemed to find the working of natural law capricious or irregular, we should blame our powers of observation. Faith in the

uniformity of nature has become so much a part of our being that to act on the faith of it raises no enthusiasm and calls for no effort.

It is otherwise in our relations to human beings. As we pass from what is visible—the forces of the material world—to what is invisible—purpose and love and character—faith comes by her own, and is the indispensable guide of life. There are, no doubt, in the workings of societies, especially such workings as come into the field of political economy, some uniformities which are almost as much to be trusted as those of the physical world. Gresham's law that when purer and more debased coins circulate together in a country, the worse will have a tendency to drive the better out of circulation, acts almost with the regularity of a law of nature. But when it is a question of individuals and of private conduct, experience loses its cogency, since we never know with scientific certainty what course of action any man or woman will take. And then we have to trust to faith.

In essence, faith is, as has already been said, a self-determination, a putting of the whole being into an attitude of trust. Partly this is done from within: suddenly, or by degrees, a man makes up his mind that, whether A or B be really trustworthy or not, he is resolved to trust him. But such resolve very seldom or never arises wholly from within. Without a flow of impulse coming from without, love and respect, which arise involuntarily from the action or the characters of others on us, few men would have the inner force to adopt the attitude of trust. And indeed, in the world as we find it, it is usually some definite action of a friend which first kindles the fire. Involuntarily we feel that we should be base and ungrateful if we did not reciprocate the friendship which he has shown us. Thus trust which, if it arose entirely out of stress of will, would be hard and cold, is the easiest and simplest thing possible when aroused by love.

Our faith in any of our friends or colleagues is based upon our experience of his past

behaviour, or on our reading of his character. It goes, however, beyond the experience, for if we only trusted people in matters in which we had known them to take the right course, we could not live an ordinary human life. The degree to which we trust them is largely determined by emotion, by likes and dislikes which are very imperfectly rationalised. Some persons have the power to trust others in a much higher degree than usual; some, again, possess in a remarkable degree the tact which judges who is to be trusted, while others seem destitute of this faculty. But in every case, so far as a man is reasonable and sensible, he is willing to withdraw his faith when he finds by experience that it is ill-placed. If he has clear proof that his confidence is abused, his faith is destroyed. His faith is based on experience, goes beyond experience, and is controlled by experience.

Faith in one's fellow-men when aroused gives further birth to emotion, to feelings of love and trust. It makes one think of one's

fellows with a certain warmth of heart, and infuses a glow of hope into one's thoughts about one's country, or the future of any social movement in which one is interested. It kindles a flame on the altar of life. Faith in men as individuals cannot exactly give occasion to a creed. Yet when one says that so and so is a trustworthy person, that his word is to be taken and that he is not actuated solely by selfish motives, one does throw one's faith in him into the simplest of intellectual forms.

And whereas in faith in the uniformity of nature there can scarcely be discerned an ethical element, since such faith is the very condition of existence in civilised society, there is much that is ethical in all faith which is reposed in one's fellows. Whether the object of faith is worthy or unworthy does not immediately determine the ethical character of faith, since the noblest and most beautiful faith may be exercised in regard to people quite unworthy of it, and the poorest and most halting faith may be exercised in relation

to the noblest of comrades. How faith is given depends on tact, on perception of character, and so forth. It makes all the difference in regard to happiness in life, in regard to success in one's endeavours and the like, but it does not immediately affect character. That is formed from within, not moulded from without. No man is more admirable than the man who persists in trusting a person of uncertain character until he compels him to become more worthy of trust.

Any faith in man which is worthy of the name is not too much at the mercy of experience. It is a cold heart in which the budding shoots of faith are easily blighted by the cold winds of distrust when appearances seem to throw doubt upon the worthiness of the person trusted. Yet there is a certain degree of hostile experience which must needs destroy faith in the case of every one whose ship of life is steered by reason. Repeated and painful disappointment of trust reposed in

a friend must lead any man save a nature of exceptional love and heroism into disillusion and despair. And even the hero of faith can only venture to trust one often found wanting in matters in which only his own happiness is concerned. He has no right to expose to severe risks the happiness of others or the success of important causes. The husband who "lets a wife whom he knows false abide and rule the house," the statesman who allows a man who has violated important trusts still to remain in a position of responsibility, is rightly condemned by all sober-minded men. Beautiful as is the faith which can survive many disappointments, a man has no right to cultivate such inner beauty at the risk of the community. He has to steer, as every life has to steer, a middle course between baleful alternatives. Faith, like all human virtues, is a mean between extremes—between cold distrust on one side and fond credulity on the other.

II. RELIGIOUS FAITH

Religious faith is not in kind essentially different from the faith already spoken of, except that it has less to do with the seen and more with the unseen. In its lowest and most rudimentary form it consists, at all events for civilised people, in that confidence in the uniformity of nature, that trust in the continual properties of material things which I have already mentioned. But it is hardly worthy of the name of religious faith unless it goes further into the realm of good and evil. Here its essence lies in the belief, sustained by a continuous will to believe, that a beneficent and wise Power lies behind the visible world; that the working of the universe, if it could be understood, would be found to be essentially kind and good to man; that life is worth living; and that it is, in the long run, wise to do what it is our duty to do.

When, in this frame of mind, we look on nature, we are prepared to feel the sublimity

and appreciate the beauty which is laid before us. If there are many things in the visible world, in the life of plants and animals, which are hard to reconcile with underlying benevolence, we pass them by, as we should pass action in a friend which seemed on the surface to be unworthy of his character, but the motives of which we yet believed on the whole to be good. We are prepared to thank the Creator for our life and the mercies with which we are surrounded in life.

And in the same way the past history of our own race and of the world will seem, as a whole, to show the gradual working of Divine ideas, the evolution of a better order out of a worse, the final triumph of good over evil. History will not seem a chaos, a weltering maze of conflicting tendencies in which chance is supreme, but a slow unfolding of what, for want of a better phrase, we may call the Divine purposes.

As for any life in the world it is necessary that we should have belief in our fellow-men

passing the limit of our mere experience of their powers and good-will, so for any effective life directed to a higher purpose there is necessary a certain amount of optimism, a hardy hope, a trust in the prevalence of what is good. No man can long persist in trying to benefit society if he is convinced that all is matter of chance, that evil is as near to the heart of the universe as good, that there is no directing hand on the wheel of fortune. The mood of despair is not a mood which brings anything to pass. It is true that through a period of despair a man may continue to carry out the purposes conceived in a mood of hopefulness. But the flame must needs gradually die down and be extinguished unless it is revived by some fresh enthusiasm.

But if a certain degree of faith in a supreme beneficent Power be needful in a man's view of the material world and the world of history, it is still more necessary in regard to the course of his own life. It is indeed far more necessary; for a life uninspired and unstimu-

lated by some belief in duties laid upon it by Divine power, some end set before it by Divine providence, will be a life dull and limited in an extreme degree. I have read many biographies in recent years, but never one from which faith of this kind was wholly absent. The faith may take a great variety of expressions. A man may be a speculative atheist; but even so he will almost always put some semi-impersonation — Destiny, Nature, even Evolution—in the place which is vacant. There is indeed one enthusiasm, desire to increase the happiness of one's fellow-men, which may in certain cases be divorced from religious faith and in some degree take its place. But this, when separated from all ideal elements, has not been in past history a source of such lives as have been happy in themselves or of much value to the race. The insufficiency of a purely materialist altruism as a directing force of conduct can be proved to demonstration, but at present I cannot go further into the matter.

Religious faith, like all faith, is self-determination. On its inner side it appears as a certain will to believe—or a determination at all events to act on the belief—that there is in the world a supreme moral Power, which is interested in us and wills our salvation. But it may be doubted if any man takes up such an attitude merely from intellectual conviction. The ways of thought and of action lie far apart, and few even among philosophers can ever wholly subordinate will to reason. No; trust in God arises from such inward experiences as stir and overpower the spirit, making it feel ready to stake its eternal life on the power and the goodness which it has for a few moments, it may be, realised with an overpowering conviction. Feelings either of awe or of love, or of a mingling of the two, force their way into the spirit of a man, compelling him to recognise that he is in the presence of a great moral and spiritual Power, and that it is health and life to him to obey and to trust that Power to the uttermost.

When this spiritual experience comes at a definite moment in life, in consequence of religious services or some moral crisis, it is called conversion. But it may grow up more slowly and develop in conjunction with other sides of the character.

In either case, starting from without, faith must be maintained by inflowing influence from without. It can no more grow through conviction of the intellect or mere emotion than a plant can grow when cut off from air and water. It is the gift of God, and comes and goes in ways which we cannot trace.

The belief in Divine providence, alike in history and in the personal life, is, like faith in mankind, based upon and controlled by experience, but necessarily passes on above and beyond it. If a man has not felt within him some Divine guidance urging him to what is better and dissuading him from what is worse, belief in a supreme moral Power will scarcely arise in him. And in our varied and fluctuating lives such belief, having arisen, is

very often for a time quenched by a series of misfortunes not understood, or by a want of loyal submission and steadfastness, so that often for a while the forces of despair gain the upper hand over those of faith. Here, again, the human analogy is complete, for it happens to few men to pass their lives without disillusion as to the character of some of those whom they have loved and trusted. But such eclipse of human trust can be, unless it is to wreck happiness and energy, but a temporary phase. So also the eclipse of religious faith is shown by numberless biographies to be usually a transient phase, a plunge into deep waters, whence one emerges at last chastened and sobered, but not finally given over to disbelief. It may be that death intervenes before the relief has come, in which case despair seems to have finally mastered its victim. And if one could believe that death was final and complete, that personality was utterly extinguished in the grave and passed into nothingness, this would be a terrible hindrance in the way of

faith. Otherwise, one may regard these painful cases as not in essence different from the rest, but only examples in which the final result is hidden from our sight.

It is, however, of the essence of religious belief that it goes beyond the mere fact. In the course of history the working of higher purpose cannot be definitely proved to a sceptic in the same way in which the action of national tendencies or economic factors can be proved. It must be accepted in virtue of an enthusiasm which interprets facts, and refuses to be contented with obvious and visible laws. There is always an atheistic explanation of history which, to the merely indifferent and unemotional intelligence, may seem as rational and satisfactory a view as that which involves theistic hypotheses. The choice between the two methods of explanation rests not with the mere intelligence, but with the principle of life, which refuses to rest in that which is contrary to its nature, and which blights its best energies. If there were

anything absurd or demonstrably false in the theistic explanation, we might have to make a painful choice between reason and faith. But this is not the case. The two methods of reading history are equally possible and intelligible; but one stops short when the limit of intelligent observation is reached, the other seeks to bring the record of history into relations with the inner life of the spirit. All history, in fact, is dead, is a mere unmeaning procession of phenomena, until it is interpreted by actual experience of life. And the life by which the historian interprets it may be either a life in which faith has a share, or a life from which it is excluded, whether by a theory or by the stress of bitter feeling.

The individual life is like that of the community on a small scale. Thus in studying the life of another, or in contemplating our own, it is not possible to prove the working of a higher Power which proceeds on ethical lines. It cannot be set forth as a fact among other facts. But it may be accepted on the

basis of spiritual experience, and by means of it the life may be as reasonably explained as it could be without it by the mere colligation of phenomena and the observation of sequences. Where the balance of reason hangs level, faith, so to speak, throws into one of the scales the sword of enthusiasm. And in faith a man determines, to whatever results it may lead, to believe in the Divine regulation of his past life, and to trust for guidance in the future to the same Power which has given in the past a meaning and an ideal to life.

But if it be a sufficient justification of the belief in the uniformity of nature that only on that view are we able satisfactorily to deal with the materials and forces of the visible world, then surely it is a satisfactory defence of religious faith in the field of individual life and the life of the community, that it answers, that it enables men to pursue courses of action which are full of hope and courage, and to be of use in their day and generation. In the higher mathematics, as we are told, we have to

make assumptions which in themselves cannot directly be justified, but which enable us to reach correct results by a shorter road. Much in the same way it would seem that the practical results of the acceptance of theistic beliefs justify us in receiving them as working hypotheses, even if we cannot place them upon a pyramid of syllogisms resting on a ground of demonstrated fact.

From the pragmatist point of view it would seem that no better defence of faith is needed. Human life has developed these beliefs as a tree throws out branches. And as the life of the tree can only be furthered if the sap flows along the existing branches, so the tendencies which formed belief in human beings must continue to flow along the course of belief to produce the flower of happiness and the fruit of efficiency. Yet no doubt this is such an agnostic defence of faith as goes against the grain of ordinary human nature. Human nature requires not only that belief should be shown to be expedient, but that it should be

justified in the courts of reason. It demands that it should be shown not merely to be equally reasonable with unbelief, but that it should be proved to be more reasonable. Hence the rise of all the theistic philosophies. Psychologically it may be shown that the real root of these philosophies grows in a soil of active tendency. It is the subliminal conviction of the human race that theistic belief is necessary to development and happiness which gives rise in each succeeding age to theistic intellectual growths, to philosophic systems which spring up in the brains of great thinkers who put into form the unconscious impulses of their times. But still the systems are in form intellectual: they are worked out by reason and syllogism; and they must needs be examined and criticised on the grounds of reason. And the negative or atheistic systems also claim to be regarded in an intellectual light, and refuse to be put out of court on ethical or pragmatic grounds.

There are, indeed, two kinds of expression of

the theistic and the anti-theistic beliefs of a people. One is the way of poetry and literature, the other the way of philosophy and doctrine. The former, appealing to feeling and imagination, is not suited to logical examination or refutation. The latter, however, does appeal to these tests, and claims to stand or fall by them. And since the speculative intellect has become, in the course of civilisation, a very great force among us, it is impossible to refuse the challenge.

Psychology, including an examination of the faculties for acquiring knowledge and a mapping out of the limits of human intelligence, is a progressive science which has made great progress in the last generation. But in my opinion the battles of the schools as to metaphysical questions, which cannot be brought to the test of observation and experience, must always be in the long run drawn battles. This is not saying that those who take part in them are wasting their labour. On the contrary, such discussion is very stimu-

lating to the intellectual powers. And since in every generation the problems of metaphysics must be restated in a form suited to the new intellectual atmosphere, the philosopher may be a great benefactor to the human race. Experience of the past, however, does not encourage us to think that these great questions will ever meet with final solution. But they may meet with partial and temporary solutions; so that the great philosopher may be set beside the great poet as one of those who do much to further the highest activities of mankind.

III. CHRISTIAN FAITH

We come now to the third question, which is our chief subject of inquiry. What is that faith which is distinctively Christian? We shall expect it to be based upon experience and controlled by experience, but to pass by an enthusiasm of the soul beyond the limits of experience, so as to partake of the nature of a

loyalty. Christian faith differs from ordinary religious faith in virtue of its connection with history. We cannot judge it only in the light of experience, since Christianity is a historic religion, and not independent of history. But Christian history must be judged, like all history, in the light of experience, and interpreted through experience.

Let me outline the nature of Christian faith in accordance with the principles laid down. This must, of course, be done in very summary fashion, disregarding the objections which may be raised at every turn.

The essence of it is an enthusiasm which finds way in a manner of life. It grows from within, though it may be imposed from without. Though it finds expression in creeds, it is not limited by them; nor is any acquiescence in doctrine equivalent to faith.

Christian faith, being essentially theistic, vehemently asserts the Divine origin and the Divine government of the world. It is sure that the frame of things is not fortuitous, but

is regulated by a Power more closely akin to man in intellectual and moral qualities than to any other part of creation. It feels that every man is sent into the world for a purpose, and that in fulfilling that purpose he will find both success and happiness. It maintains that every nation, and every family also, has an ideal set before it, and by its approach or non-approach to that ideal is justified or condemned.

Christian faith must needs have historic roots. It may sit lightly in regard to history, and be ready to welcome the results of modern historic criticism of the Gospels. But it is bound to regard the life of the Founder as one really lived on earth, and His character and teaching as in essentials to be ascertained. Otherwise, the faith in Christ would rest on the same historic basis as the worship of the Virgin and of the Saints, which have no justification in the sacred books of Christianity. But it is of the very nature of vigorous faith that it can

build securely on a very narrow platform of historic fact.

And it must needs hold that after the death of the Founder a fresh spirit entered into the world, a fresh power urging to righteousness and the spiritual life. The power may be seen in history, both in the life of Paul, and in that of other disciples. And it is the power which from the first dwelt in the Church, urging it to missionary labours, enlightening the mind with high views of God and man, adopting from the society around forms and organisation which were suitable, sustaining the courage of martyrs, making life lovely with a thousand virtues and enthusiasms. Through that spirit the Power which reveals itself alike in nature and in the human spirit has made its most exalted revelations to mankind, and set up models which will be conspicuous to all time of lives which were unselfish, full of Divine light, fixed like stars in the firmament for ever.

But it is not essential to Christian faith that it should hold any special view as to the exact nature of the Christian spirit. Some view most men will be driven to accept, but at best they will be probable theories. That there is some relation between the spirit of Christianity and the person of the Founder may be regarded as certain. But we know so little about the nature of personality that we cannot be precise or final in our expression of that relation. It is perfectly natural that Paul should say, "He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him." It is perfectly natural that the writer of Hebrews should say, "He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." It is perfectly natural that the Fourth Evangelist should say, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." All these great Christian writers held different views as to the Person of Christ. And all of them

held views of quite another kind from those expressed in the intellectualist formulæ of the creeds. All of them would, had they lived to-day, have expressed themselves in very different ways.

When we turn to the history of the Church, there is also scope for variety of view. It is hard to imagine how anyone can care to call himself a Christian if he sees in the whole history of the Church nothing but corruption and decay. But though belief in Christ includes belief in His general guidance of the Church, it does not oblige us to believe in the infallibility of the Church, or to hold that the path taken by the Church is always the best path. In all human institutions good and evil are mixed. It is only in the ideal Church, the unseen Kingdom of Heaven, that the will of God is done perfectly. God reveals himself in many ways. And just as, in Paul's language, various Christian gifts and graces are said to be given to various persons, so various

sides of Christian excellence are best represented in different branches of the Church.

Christian faith in relation to experience, though shown in individuals, is essentially a corporate thing. It belongs to the Church as a whole: it is the common life of the body, of which all the members partake. That Christ is the Head of the body is the assertion of faith. The fact on which it proceeds is that in the life of the society from the first there has been present the spirit set forth in the life and the teaching of the historic Jesus. The Church, no doubt, has often been in a state of decline and of decay; but it has been again and again renewed. And the renewal has not taken the form of a new religion which has absorbed the old, but the form of a new interpretation of the writings of the early Church, and a revival of the spirit of the Founder. All this would not be enough to prove to a sceptic the reality of the Christian inspiration, but it is enough to justify the Church in passing

beyond the data of experience into the life of faith.

The Church cannot be independent of facts, whether the facts of history or the facts of experience; it cannot give up its basis in the world of time and sense and remain floating in the air, though it can give up, if necessary, all that a sane and sober criticism would deny to be history, or can prove to be morbid in experience. And then from this platform it strains upwards into the realm of ideals. It passes from the shadow thrown upon the world of sense by divine realities; and approaches, by a slow and never ending process, those realities themselves. These we can never enclose in words, or reduce to being members of an intellectual system which shall be firmly fixed for all time. But they can inspire the will and mould the life; they can give happiness and energy, and make life worth living. And they can even inspire the intellect, giving it views of the past, of the

future, and of the higher aspects of the present which may make a man a prophet to his generation and a light to all time.

Though the life of faith in the Church is essentially a common life, running through all ages and binding communities together in a common faith and hope, yet there is also a faith which belongs to the individual. For the individual Christian has also a life-history, a soul to be saved or corrupted, a work in the world to be done or neglected. And between the single soul and its Maker there is a path open, a way kept by the practice of faith and prayer. Every man has the faculty of being inspired by the Divine life, just as every mass of iron is capable of being wrought into a lightning-conductor. But in fact only a small proportion of our iron is used to make a path for the lightning. And, in the same way, it is only few and rarely gifted souls which are acutely conscious of being led by the Spirit of God. Often the Divine leading

is so disguised and hidden under the guise of circumstance and natural impulse and the personalities of friends that it is not consciously recognised. In all nations and at all times there are prophets—few, often scarcely recognised, often persecuted and despised. But it is the conviction of Christians that by the spirit of Christ the way to God is made easier. It is the adherence to Christian rites, and a conscious desire to continue the life of the Christian community, which makes the Christian faith different from that of the Stoic, the Jew, or the Mohammedan. As a man builds his social life on the belief in certain friends, so a Christian accepts a position, voluntarily takes up an attitude of faith in Christianity as an existing system, becomes a member of the body of which the Head is Christ.

Of the ordinances of Christianity two are the special vehicles of this influence, which in its more intense form may be called inspiration, but in its everyday aspect may

be termed Divine grace. These ordinances are, first prayer, and second the Christian Communion. Prayer may be in most cases inarticulate; it often consists only, so to speak, in an orientation of the spirit, and a resolute opening of the windows through which the higher light comes into the soul; or prayer may be, as it has usually been in the case of saintly souls, a constant and conscious exercise. The Lord's Supper has, from very early Christian times, been a special channel of spiritual influence passing into the soul, so that it has usually been regarded as the great privilege and happiness of the faithful Christian, the deprivation of which has been felt almost like the loss of one of the senses.

Christian experience, like all other mental history, has its ups and downs, its times of happiness and misery, its seasons of exaltation and outflow and its seasons of darkness and difficulty. Very seldom it is a path shining brighter and brighter; usually

it is a struggle, with mingled success and failure. The Christian will commonly believe that the causes of failure lie in himself; but this, of course, is going beyond mere experience. The sum is, that in the minds of a great number of devout Christians, many of them of most ordinary intelligence, there is a constant sense of a Presence which is inwardly revealed, of transactions between the soul and something which surrounds and dominates it, which may be described in various ways and from many points of view, but which is a thing of reality. In great crises of the life it often impresses the spirit as much more real and objective than things which appear to the bodily eyes, such as the stars. But in ordinary times of activity in the world it seems underlying rather than conspicuous.

It is unnecessary to do more than mention the facts of spiritual experience. It is no part of my plan at present to describe

them: rather I wish to examine their relation to Christian faith.

Man is not a being detached and self-contained, but a link in a chain stretching back into the remotest past and onward into the future. Our experiences are but the experiences of our ancestors renewed in a fresh microcosm: what we feel and think has been felt and thought in modified forms by those who came before us, and who by their feeling and thinking formed our capacities for thought and emotion. Life is continuous. And the Christian experience is continuous from the days when the Apostles felt first that their Master was not hidden from them by the closing gates of the grave. It is essentially the same thing, the phases of which are recorded in the Epistles of Paul and echoed in the Confessions of Augustine. Broadly speaking, it is like the sense of sex or the sentiment of nationality—a vast human phenomenon, the results of which are con-

spicuous in every page of human history. The Christian Church, outwardly regarded, has many divisions; but it has a deep-lying unity which is based upon its special inspiration.

Christian faith has to work upon the facts of religious experience in the Christian world of to-day and as revealed in the history of the Church from the beginning. By those facts faith is regulated. Any form or development of faith which is in irreconcilable contradiction either with the experience of to-day or the ascertained facts of history is doomed, and must sooner or later perish. But faith cannot be extracted from the facts themselves, nor gained by argument from the facts. It is essentially an active and living principle, which passes beyond fact into the realm of feeling and of conduct.

III

THE DIVINE WILL

The phrase on which I propose to dwell, "the Divine Will," is one so familiar, alike in Christian and in philosophic discussions, that I fear I may have chosen an unattractive subject. But every age is obliged constantly to discuss and re-discuss the main principles of religious thought in the various lights thrown by the changing intellectual conditions of each: if such subjects were not constantly brought up afresh, they would pass into the background of the mind of the Church. And we learn more and more by experience that it does not at all follow, because a phrase is familiar to us, that we really understand it or discern its full value.

It is unnecessary to do more than indicate in a few words the vast importance to Christianity of the conception of the Divine Will. In fact, no phrase occurs more prominently and insistently in the New Testament than this. It has a place, as we all know, in the Lord's Prayer; and alike in the Gospels and in the Epistles it recurs again and again. It is set forth as the principle of Christian obedience to do the Will of God; the Christian's hope is that that Will may be done more and more on earth. The sum of his intellectual ambition is to know what the Will of God is; and it is the crown of his character to love the Will of God as revealed in the world.

I do not say that the conception is peculiar to Christianity. It is prominent in all three of the great Semitic religions — Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. On the other hand, it is quite foreign to some of the religions of the world, such as Buddhism. Christianity not only builds the conception into its founda-

tions, but also takes it in a different sense from other religions, and uses it far more strenuously.

In the present brief treatment I shall endeavour to do two things. First, I shall try to show that the progress of thought, science, and discovery has not invalidated the phrase *the Divine Will*, nor deprived it of meaning. Secondly, I shall treat, even more briefly, of the essentially Christian way of interpreting the ideas which the phrase implies.

I

The phrase "the Divine Will" has a special attraction for some of the newer schools of theology. The reason for this may appear presently. But first let us meet the two objections which are commonly brought against any religious insistence upon the idea of the Will of God. As a matter of fact, they have been brought by critics against views expressed in works which I

have published, in which I have endeavoured to speak of the Divine Will in the world. It has been objected, in the first place, that the phrase is essentially anthropomorphic, and inconsistent with the loftiest ideas of the Divine nature; and, in the second place, that an insistence on the primacy of the Divine Will overlooks the predominance in the world of law, order, reason, to which will seems an opposed conception.

Some lovers of philosophy, and, indeed, some Christian lovers of philosophy, will say that the expression "the Will of God" belongs rather to an older time than to the present day. It implies, they will say, an anthropomorphic view of the Divine nature. They will call it a survival of the habit by which men, from the very dawn of civilisation, have conceived their deities after a human pattern. We have a right, they will maintain, to use such phrases as "the Divine immanence" or "the Divine ground of our being," but not phrases of such simple

humanity as "the Divine Will" or "the Divine Purpose." The progress of science, they hold, has enlarged our view until we see that the main phrases of psychology—thought, feeling, will—must be reserved to be applied to men only, and not to the Divine nature.

To such objectors we shall at once allow that the enormous progress made in the investigation and interpretation of nature which is the most remarkable feature of the last century has made no longer possible for men who reflect many of the simple, and in their time reverent, ways of speaking of the Divine nature. If we think of God as seated on a celestial throne, with Jesus Christ seated on His right hand, looking down on the inhabitants of this lower world, we realise that this is only poetic imagery. Even many of the phrases familiar to all who read their Bibles—such phrases as "the hand of God" and "the wings of God"—seem to us metaphorical phrases. Nor do we like to

speak of a jealous God, nor of a God who repents, nor of a God who inflicts sudden and visible punishment on those who do not fear His name.

But although man's knowledge of the world about him has been enormously widened, and his perception of uniform law through the universe has been greatly deepened, yet man himself is not in essentials greatly changed. His physical senses, apart from artificial aids to them, have not grown keener with advancing civilisation, but rather duller; his intelligence is certainly not greater than it was in the days of Aristotle or of Cicero, though he has learned economy in its use. The avenues of knowledge are not enlarged: the speculative questions of philosophy are much the same to us that they were to the sages of India, the philosophers of Greece, and the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages. The poems of Homer, the Hebrew Psalms, often seem to us as fresh as if they had been written yesterday.

And such phrases as "the will of God," "the love of God," belong not to that outer realm in which we have made such vast discoveries, but to the inner realm which is for us very much what it was to our ancestors, though, of course, we know more about it, since in recent years psychology and sociology have made great progress. They are a rendering in words or in thought of an inner, a spiritual experience which belongs to our deepest being, and has a meaning for every man who has not by disuse atrophied his higher powers or through pedantry determined not to listen to their testimony.

These phrases do imply, no doubt, an analogy between the relations of God to man and the relations of men to one another. But this is of the very essence of the religious consciousness. Through the ways of physical science one attains the conception of a Deity great beyond greatness, powerful beyond power, but not in close

relation to man. Through the ways of speculative thought one may reach, with the followers of Hegel, the notion of a Deity in whom subject and object are combined in a transcendent unity; but such a God has no relation to practical life. But the moment one retires into the citadel of the human personality one finds the presence of a God who must be thought of in human terms, who is the hearer and answerer of prayer, who is a very present help in trouble, who guides us in life, and to whom we are ready to entrust our souls when we feel the advent of death. It is the business of philosophic theology to co-ordinate all the aspects in which God is revealed to man, whether by science, by philosophy, or by consciousness. But philosophy has no right to set aside as inconvenient the direct facts of human nature. These are essential conditions of her problem, and any synthesis which neglects them is thereby condemned as a one-sided synthesis.

Thus when philosophers raise speculative difficulties in regard to such conceptions as the Divine Will and Divine inspiration, we are justified in replying that we are but expressing in the best human language that we can find some of the primary facts of human consciousness. If philosophers cannot fit these facts into their systems of the universe, so much the worse for those systems. Surely the world of culture has suffered enough in the last two thousand years from the determination of metaphysicians to construct, at all cost of fact and reality, systems which seem to be logical digests of the universe, until in a few years another metaphysician comes with a new system, probably equally ingenious and certainly equally one-sided. Philosophy has its value, and no doubt it will go on in the future as in the past; but no worker in the field of physical science would give up a theory which really helped to bind together and to explain facts, merely because it

involved some speculative difficulty. The workers in the field of religion will, if they are wise, follow this practical example, and value rather the actual bearing of their views of the nature of God and of man than their speculative completeness or their abstract reasonableness.

The second objection of which I have spoken is very much like the first, and seems to come from the same camp. When we speak of the Will of God do we not imply something arbitrary and something in opposition to the law and order which we find on all sides of us in the world of nature, and even, in a less degree, in society? I think that this objection may well serve as a warning. If we look back over the history of Christianity, we shall see that some schools of theology have spoken of the Divine Will in such a way as to lay themselves open to this objection. The views of Calvin, for example, as to predestination and reprobation, perhaps the views of Augustine on the same

subject, represent the Will of God as arbitrary and even immoral. They compare it, not with the will of a righteous father, but with the caprice of the potter when he makes a vessel for honour or for dishonour. I think that their basis was one of actual fact; but they somewhat misread the fact.

I also think, though here I may not carry with me all liberal Christians, that those who base upon a strong realisation of the Divine Will in the world the possibility or even the actuality of physical miracles, of violations of the laws of the material world, in the time of early Christianity, proceed in a way which is quite unjustifiable. We must judge of the Will of God by experience, and we have no right, if we find it in some respects to resemble human will, to assume that it resembles human will in all respects, or is arbitrary and unreasonable, or that it will interpose in the course of natural law, as a man might interpose to ward off a falling stone from a child or to lift him out of a river. What I mean

will, I hope, become clearer as we proceed. But I wish from the first to make it clear that by the phrase "the Divine Will" I understand a will which moves with order, which is reasonable. Indeed, whether we speak of the action of God in the realm of spirit as showing a reasonable will, or as showing a practical reason, seems to me almost indifferent. My chief contention is that we must judge of this action by experience, and not determine its nature beforehand on *a priori* grounds, imagining it as bounded by human reason and logical ways: "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"

It is a commonplace, alike with historians and preachers, that the doctrine of the Divine Will plays a great part in early Christianity. It is a feature in the New Testament so prominent that it can scarcely be overlooked. And yet, as I think, it has in recent days not been sufficiently regarded. Christianity has many sides, and it is the way with churches or

schools of thought to dwell upon that side of it which has most affinity with the special tendencies of those schools or churches. In recent days the essence of Christianity has been found by some writers in the teaching of the Divine Fatherhood, by some in the Incarnation or the Atonement, by some in the enthusiasm of humanity. So far as I am aware, the teaching of the Divine Will has not been thus in recent years taken as a foundation-stone. The theology of Calvin, in the sixteenth century, may fairly be said to have been a theology of the Divine Will. And for generations the theology of Calvin has lain at the root of Puritan teaching. But during the last century a rapid decay set in, and the strong Calvinist theology in its fullness is scarcely now current in any branch of the Church—at all events, in any English branch. Perhaps the time has come when some of the main features of Calvinist theology may be set forth in a new way, and may be found still to wake an echo among some modern Christians.

In another work I have tried to explain in what ways the doctrine of the Divine Will is Christianised in the teaching of the Gospels.[1] There it is combined with the teaching that man is the roof and crown of all material things, and God the end and ruler of man. And it is transformed by the influence of the life and the teaching of Jesus so as to be no longer a hard and cold tenet of a Stoic philosophy, but a living germ of emotion and action. It is in this fashion that the doctrine has entered, not only into the beginnings of Christianity, but into the work of those who, in the history of the Church, have been most like their Master. A passion for the Divine Will reflecting the Founder's own high passion has again and again arisen in the Church and lifted it to high enterprises and great reforms. As the purpose of this paper is not historical, but rather has reference to the experiences and the needs of the present day, it will be better to proceed to consider in what way the

[1] *The Growth of Christianity,* pp. 16–22.

Divine Will is presented to us in the modern world of nature and of society.

II

So far as we can fathom the mystery of the universe, the secret of it lies in a constant stream of force displayed in many fields and in various ways. The only notion of force which can possibly be framed by man starts from consciousness and is built upon will, since we ourselves are the only beings whose actual energy enters into our experience.

But it does not take a very profound knowledge of the physical world, nor a wide experience of life, to show us that, if the cosmic force must be compared to will, and read in terms of will, yet in many of its manifestations it greatly differs from the will of which we are conscious.

In the world of physical phenomena, the visible universe which conditions and encompasses our material life, we find everywhere

force acting according to fixed and unvarying law. This fixity is perhaps most conspicuous in such provinces as that of astronomy, where the time of an eclipse can be foretold to a moment, and that of chemistry, where experiments, repeated a thousand times, in every case yield exactly the same result. Among things which have life, in the domain of biology, force presents itself in another aspect, moving rather by tendency than by invariable process—tendency in which we may trace what, from the human point of view, one may call higher purpose. But what I have to insist upon is that when we turn from that which is without to that which is within, to the realm of consciousness and of conduct, the cosmic force or will at once presents itself in quite another light—not as actual, but as ideal; not as incorporated in a world of law, but as a regulative principle of conduct, showing us not what must be but what may be or ought to be; not as that which always is, but as that which is ever becoming.

As man is by his body connected with the outward universe, so by his consciousness and his moral nature he finds himself in constant contact with a divine life. Around him and above him stretches a spiritual world of which his soul is a member. But this contrast between what is without and what is within, between the realm of law and order and the realm of liberty and ideals, is one which the human race has only by degrees realised. One may even say that Kant was the first thinker to set it forth clearly in the language of articulate thought.

If we go back a certain distance in the history of civilised peoples, or if we examine the mental state of those still in a barbarous condition, we find the line between the outer and the inner world not drawn with clearness. The science of anthropology shows us how all nations have passed through a stage called animism, in which the powers of the world about us—wind and rain, sun and moon, and the rest—are supposed to be

moved by volitions like those of man himself, so that they can be persuaded by gifts, or compelled by sorcery, to favour this or that votary. By degrees the spirit of sun or moon, of wind or rain, is eliminated from the mere natural phenomenon, and then we have a pantheon of naturalist deities sitting above and over the natural forces which they control.

And when polytheism passes, as it tended to pass in historic Greece, into monotheism, something still survives of the notion that the energy which sways the material world is a capricious human will, so that a Divine Purpose may easily alter the order of events in nature, making iron swim or the sun stand still for some moral or religious end. By very slow degrees the world realises that it is not thus that God works, and that the physical world is a world of invariable sequence. Few of us, if we carefully examined our own thoughts, would find the belief in miraculous interventions of God in the world about us quite extinct. And it is certain

that a belief in miracles as a test and confirmation of religious teaching plays a great part in the history of Christianity.

Nevertheless it is noteworthy how few miracles proper, as contrasted with works of faith-healing, which are, of course, not miraculous, the early Christian disciples assigned to their Master. The reason of this probably is that at the very roots of the teaching of Jesus lies a conviction that the Kingdom of God is within, not without—that it lies in the relation of spirit to spirit. God does not exercise His will in changing the order of events in the visible world, but in guiding human action, and in giving the Holy Spirit to them that ask.

There is current a loose and inaccurate way of regarding the relations of the physical world to the human spirit, and to the Divine Spirit which works in and through it. Many people cannot think of the spiritual control of the material save as a supernatural or miraculous interference with natural law.

They puzzle themselves with theories of causation and necessity until they regard the whole world, human and other, as a sort of machine which, when once set going, will proceed by itself. And they do not see how Divine Purpose can take effect in this fixed scheme, save by definite interposition. Nor do they understand how God can intervene in human lives save by a voice from heaven. A deeper view of the world—a view tinged by a certain amount of mysticism—is really a truer view. The Divine Power works not so much from outside as from within. In fact, the whole energy of the universe works from within outwards. It forms alike the physical universe and human character. Through each of these it works on the other, and the manner of its working is a matter for infinite investigation.

Tennyson has summed up the whole matter as well as it can be summed up in his two lines:

> "Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

No doubt the whole question of free will in man, and of the Divine Power which works through it, is hemmed in by enormous speculative difficulties. Into these I cannot enter. I would only observe that it is not possible for a moment to deny that inherited character and tendency form a constant limit to the action of free will. It is not possible by mere volition wholly to change one's nature. Generally speaking, the line of action moves on from the past to the future in lines which may be observed, if they cannot be calculated. But unless man has a power of self-modification, and unless there is a spiritual power which can aid him in the changing and ennobling of his life, then the essential Christian teaching has no root in the nature of things, and is refuted by experience.

III

When we turn from that which is without to that which is within, we enter into another realm. Here, in the place of invariable

sequence, we find idea, purpose, free will. Every soul is a member of a divine kingdom, inwardly revealed—a realm of the possible rather than of the actual, of that which might or ought to be rather than of that which is. But in this kingdom we can only take up our citizenship through self-surrender.

There is a great Power in the human world flowing in the direction of righteousness, and we have only to cast ourselves into the stream to be borne in its course. But our indolence, our evil passions, our selfishness, are barriers which rise between us and this great spiritual stream. We have power to shut ourselves away from its influences; nay, it is easy to shut ourselves away, and the door when once closed is not easy to open. Even more, we have the power to admit into the heart, not the impulse which leads to the better, but that which leads to the worse—to follow the whispers of temptation and take the road that leads away from life to destruction. Every soul lies between the spiritual powers

of good and of evil, and can incline to either side. But the power of good is by nature stronger, since it is more in accord with ultimate realities than the power of evil; and he who sets himself, even with faint and faltering will, on the side of the good will find a reinforcement of strength not his own, which may bear him on to better things in spite of all weakness, and in spite of occasional relapse.

We are accustomed to associate the phrases "Will of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven" with conduct exclusively, and even only with such sides of conduct as are by tradition connected with religious teaching. But this restriction does not lie in the nature of things. Every thought, every feeling, and every action which tends to the raising and betterment of mankind is work for the Kingdom. The artist who toils in poverty and obscurity towards the development of his art, the musician who tries to wed music to the better, not the worse, side of human nature, the man of science who devotes his life to the study of a group of

natural phenomena, the historian who buries himself among archives in the hope of elucidating some phase of past history, are just as much the soldiers of the Divine Will as are the priest and the philanthropist. Every thought and every deed which in past days has furthered and sweetened the life of men is done in accordance with the Will of God. The Divine ideas are partially and imperfectly, but constantly, being worked by human agency into the woof of history. And in every age they are opposed by the vice and indolence of mankind, or thrust aside by spurious imitations and unworthy rivals which succeed better because they appeal more directly to the obvious self-interest of men.

It is not impossible that some people may regard this insistence upon the phrase "the Will of God" as savouring of obscurantism. It might bear this complexion if one were to regard the Will of God as obscure, unintelligible, capricious, like the wills of some men. But no person can carefully study the

phenomena of human life without feeling that it also is after all a scene of profound order. However the will of God may seem to us at moments strange and harsh, yet our reason itself suggests that this is but a superficial view. And our feeling of gratitude for life, and loyalty to the source of life, will make us cleave to the belief that the Divine Will, could we but better know it, would be found to be kind, consistent, and generous.

The schools of philosophy have always been more disposed to speak of the Divine Reason or thought than of the Divine Will. If we think of God from the practical side, we shall think of Him mainly as Will, but Will which is reasonable. If we bring our speculative thought to bear upon God, we shall think of Him mainly as Intelligence; but it must be as an Intelligence to whom to think and to act is the same thing. On both sides we men, being both acting and thinking creatures, may come into the Divine presence. Alike in will and thought we may be loyal. But in

the present case it is religion, and not philosophy, which is our subject; and therefore we speak primarily of the Divine Will. But in doing so we must never forget the immortal words of Isaiah: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

IV

This Divine Purpose, this law of the ideal life, is revealed to men in various ways. First of all, and beyond all, to the individual. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." By prayer, by waiting, by obedience, men and women become conscious of a higher Presence and a calling. I have said "become conscious"; but though the higher revelation of the Divine Will is conscious, yet with most people, and with all people at most times, it lies beneath consciousness and is not often strongly realised as an objective call. But at crises and turning-points of the life it often

bears in upon us with startling clearness. Here Socrates and St Paul are at one. At such times, in less critical and introspective ages, men thought they heard a voice from heaven uttering articulate words. But whether heard or only felt in the heart, whether accepted or rejected, the impulse is recognised as one of the primary experiences of the religious life.

I might here endeavour to show how the primary impulse from above acts in the soul of man—how it stirs the emotions, urges the will, and even opens the eyes of the understanding to see things as they really are. But I need not here dwell on these primary facts of religious psychology—partly because I have written of them elsewhere, to the best of my ability,[1] partly because they are set forth with deeper knowledge and greater authority than I can claim by others. In the opinion of some of the ablest and best trained of modern psychologists, such facts as that man is

[1] *Exploratio Evangelica,* chaps. ii.–vi.

susceptible of spiritual inspiration, and that such inspiration has power in a moment to change the course of his life and endow him with strength and wisdom beyond his previous hopes—such facts as these stand on as well assured a basis, are as fully borne out by testimony and experience, as any facts whatever of the conscious life.

Will in man is naturally prior to thought: impulse accumulates before it finds a vent in one channel or another. Thus a readiness to do the Will of God precedes the question to what that Will points. Intelligence and reason, of course, also have their part in the matter, and without them there can be no consistency or wisdom in life. But reflection comes at a later stage than purpose. And reason will never by itself show us what the Divine Will is. It will show us to what end certain kinds of action work; but it will not help us to choose between ends, or furnish us with motives for action. It is a light to guide our feet, but it does not give us an impulse to

move. Thus the question how we can know the Divine Will can never be separated from the practical question how we shall do the Divine Will. Unless there be in our hearts a desire to do the Will of God, we shall not by mere thinking find out to what it points.

There is profound truth in the words of the collect, "O God, without Thee we are not able to please Thee." It is only by Divine aid that we are able to carry out the Divine Will. God must work in us, and we in God, if we would accomplish that for which we were sent into the world.

But, further, we cannot do the Will of God, or know the Will of God, until we have learned, at least in some measure, to love the Will of God. Our emotional nature must also bring its contribution. And the love of poor human nature has to be bought. With love happiness is inextricably bound up: as Milton says, "Without love no happiness." We can indeed only love those from whom we have

received, or expect to receive, happiness or a furtherance of life. And it is the natural and inevitable reaching towards happiness, the craving which is like the craving of the plant for water and for sun, which draws us in the direction of love. Hence another great principle of religious psychology, another fact of human nature, recognised and consecrated by Christianity, is that the way of obedience to Divine leading is also the path of happiness. This teaching is, in its lower form, no mystic doctrine, but the verdict of experience. It is the things done in accordance with nature which make up the durable and permanent happiness of our lives—healthy physical exercise and nourishment, the domestic affections, the putting forth of mental and moral activities. But to the Christian the teaching has a higher aspect. It is the lower pleasures which spring from mere personal activities and the natural assertion of oneself in the world. The higher pleasures spring from the merging of self in a noble enthusiasm, or in a mystic communion

with the working of the Spirit of God in the world.

So far I have spoken of the revelation of the Divine Will to the individual. To such revelation some persons are infinitely more susceptible than others. And this susceptibility is rare even in nations in which, as in England and Germany, the personality is often strongly developed. Religion would indeed have a precarious hold among men if its acceptance were dependent upon the personal acceptance of a definite relation to the Divine Will. We are all members one of another, parts of smaller or larger societies—a family, a group, a nation. Every family, group, or nation has, or should have, a definite spiritual life and tendency, so that by mere adherence to it men may fall more easily into the path of Divine energy in relation to which they are born.

But it is especially the Church, or any branch of the Church into contact with which we come, which treasures up and brings

together the inspirations of individuals. The main function of the Church is to act as a great spiritual reservoir. Into a lake the mountain streams discharge themselves with irregular volume, according to the weather or the season; and from the lake flows at all times a steadfast river, sometimes fuller and sometimes less copious, but never dry. So the Church collects the results of the divine impulses of her most favoured members, and treasures them in order to make her stream more grateful to the thirsty lands. She has, to continue the comparison, perennial springs in the narratives of the life of the Founder and the epistles of His Apostles; but besides these there is an influx, sometimes abundant and sometimes scanty, from all devout souls. We may even go a step further, and say that in days when the outpourings of the Spirit are abundant the regular springs become comparatively less important; in times of drought they are beyond value. I speak, I need scarcely say, of the ideal Church, which has

never been fully realised on earth. All the existing churches, while they must necessarily in some degree fulfil the function of reservoirs, yet sadly contaminate the waters stored in them, so that one often longs for a draught from the pure mountain brook. I will return to this comparison later.

Philosophy, from the days of Socrates downwards, has been very much in the habit of first trying to argue out what is the path of duty, and then assuming that when a man knows what is right he will do it without further hesitation. It is true that this assumption is falsified in all experience of life. But the philosophers think that, if not the case, it ought to be the case, and must for their purposes be assumed to be the case. Religion, and above all the Christian religion in its original form, inverts the order of philosophy, and makes a knowledge of what is right arise out of the habit of doing what is right. It establishes obedience as the organ of spiritual knowledge. If a man determines to do the

Will of God, the Synoptic writings do not speak of difficulties which he will meet in discovering what that Will is.

To many of us moderns the path of the Divine Will does not seem to be thus easily found. We are reasoning and self-conscious beings, and have to consider the bearings of our actions in every direction. No doubt some *modus vivendi* has to be discovered between the philosophic argument, which clears the understanding but leaves the heart cold, and the religious impulse, which finds eager vent in action but does not always go with wisdom. But there can be little doubt that the course alike of modern scientific investigation and of modern speculative thought is to value more and more highly the religion which strikes direct at the heart and will. Thought will always claim its rights; and in a scientific age like ours no educated person can escape from the conviction that we must value more and more the method which systematises knowledge and the wisdom

which constantly looks to the results of courses of action. Yet observation, reasoning, and system will never inspire a man with the desire to do what is right; they will only show him how to reach the ends he desires, whether they be good or evil. They are the rudder of the ship, but not the sails.

IV

THE FUNCTION OF PRAYER

The question of prayer is one of religious psychology, a branch of mental science which until lately can scarcely have been said to exist. So long as religion and Christianity were identified, as they used to be by religious writers, it was impossible to see the wood for the trees, or to distinguish between what is the common ground of religion and the Christian edifice built upon it. But when the method of comparison between the facts of Christianity and those of such religions as Buddhism and Islam was introduced, it began to be perceived that all religions have certain features in common, that Christianity is the loftiest branch of a great tree which has many branches, and

that we may, without ceasing to be Christians understand and appreciate other forms of faith.

In treating of any part of religious psychology, what is above all things necessary is to discern between fact and theory. This is not easy. All the facts of religion are, especially to Christians, so overgrown with doctrine and theory, so buried under profound feeling and hope and desire, that they are not readily to be discerned. I have no wish to disturb the theory, or to touch with venturesome hand the hopes and feelings of Christians. But a survey of the foundations is necessary, for unless these be sound all the superstructure is liable at any time to fall in a general ruin. I shall therefore try to adhere as closely as I can to fact, to reality, to the essential ground of experience, and to set aside theory and the dicta of authority, not at all as valueless, but as not pertaining to the present quest.

The particular set of facts which I propose to consider are those of prayer. Prayer is the most universal of the phenomena of

religion, found in all countries and at all times. Although I would scarcely venture to say that without prayer religion cannot exist, I would certainly say that religion without prayer is in a decaying and evanescent condition.

I

There is obviously one presupposition of prayer, one condition under which alone it becomes possible: the condition that he who prays believes and feels himself to be in direct relation with a great spiritual Power to whom he has access. The votary must feel that the prayer does not pass away into an infinite void, but expresses a real contact of spirit with spirit. This is, of course, a matter of experience, of living, and it may be that many of those to whom the experience is a real and constant one might be unable to find for it a satisfactory intellectual expression. Many would be content, and wisely content, with using the expression,

familiar to every Christian, of the Father in Heaven. Among recent attempts to find a more scientific or philosophic expression, I think the most successful is the Emersonian word *Oversoul.*

The fundamental facts in regard to the Divine nature which make prayer possible seem to be the following. First, the immediate contact of the human spirit and the Divine, so that every man can at all times hope to attain to the Divine presence. It is a corollary of this that by means of such contact all human beings are united one to the other in at least the possibility of a Divine fellowship. And second, that strength and wisdom from an unmeasured Divine storehouse may pass into a man's life under certain conditions. Conservation of energy may be a law in the physical universe, but the underlying spiritual universe knows no such law.

Between the human and the Divine there is a barrier—the barrier of the will. This is, as it were, the gate between man and the

Divine; and man has a strange power to bar the gate, and to keep it barred. On the other hand, he has the power to throw open his soul to higher influences, which he cannot indeed command, but which, if he set himself to welcome them, will not fail to act upon his life.

Prayer, broadly speaking, is the intercourse between the human and the Divine. It is through prayer that a door is opened whereby Divine influences pass into human life. It is by investigation and thought that man discerns the facts of the world about him and the history of the human race in the past. It is by incessant and far-seeing activity that he subdues the visible world to his purposes. But it is not alone by investigation nor by active energy that he can translate his moral life into a higher key, or attain to knowledge of the Divine. Here he must be less acquisitive than receptive. He must attend and wait, and ever be ready to admit into his heart and his life the higher influences which

come to his door. Prayer is in essence a waiting, a humble approach of the human to the Divine. Yet although it be largely passive, it is not purely passive, but has in it an element of activity. Herein it is like attention, which is a waiting for knowledge, but a waiting which involves some active strain, partly because he who attends attends to some things rather than to others, partly because he who attends waits with muscles and nerves braced, ready to turn to definite purpose that which he thus learns by patience and self-control. Like attention, then, prayer is a mixture of the active and the passive. To enter upon it a man must strive with full purpose of heart and a determination to do away with the barriers that rise before him. But unless this active striving be met by, and indeed be merged in, a flood of power from a source outside and above man, it can lead to nothing.

Now there can be little doubt that the spirit of prayer in modern days suffers great

hindrance. There seems to be uncertainty as to the efficacy of prayer and its acceptability. Men who in past days would have almost been regarded as saints are not in the habit of praying. Many good men have persuaded themselves that the only admissible prayers are acts of submission to the revealed will of God, and efforts to accept it with loving willingness. And those who retain the habit of prayer are perhaps more and more given to using the particular formulæ handed down in the churches, praying by the book rather than with the free spirit.

It seems to me that if the intercourse between the Divine and the human will be no delusion, but a real experience, then prayer is the vital breath of religion. I propose to examine some of the speculative difficulties which in our days cling to it, and to see if they are really fatal. These difficulties are of two classes: first, those which arise from a strong conviction of the dominion of law and order in the world, and which lead to doubt as

to the efficacy of prayer; and, second, those which arise from a refined conception of the Divine nature, and which lead to doubt as to the real morality of prayer. In my opinion, both of these sets of difficulties may be met. Both have their origin, not in experience, but in mistaken theory. For the slightness of treatment which the necessities of time and opportunity force on me, I must ask pardon.

II

The objections to the value and efficacy of prayer which arise from a strong sense of law and order in the world are most strongly felt by those who pursue physical science. Having given their whole lives to the ascertainment of the relations of cause and effect, the investigation of orderly trains of phenomena in the material world, they gradually acquire a belief, which may almost be called a fanaticism, that nowhere in the world are chance or caprice to be found; that all things move in a pre-

ordained, or rather fully regulated, way towards an inevitable goal; and that no human prayer can do anything to alter that course. To such thinkers it seems that their view is based upon experience—experience added to day by day, and at last amounting to an overwhelming certainty. And yet this notion is really in complete disaccord with life. Invariable law, fixed order, may be traced in the physical world; but when we turn from the physical to the human world we find something entirely different. I should be the last to say that if we could analyse to the utmost, trace back to its deepest recesses, the nature of human conduct, we should find at its root chance or caprice. Chance is merely a human or subjective view of things. When a die is thrown, its course is strictly regulated by the forces bearing upon it; we only call the result chance because we cannot trace those forces. Even the motion of the hand which throws the die is not so fortuitous as it seems: human free-will is in a great

degree illusory. But whatever in these matters be the ultimate philosophic truth, it is at least perfectly clear and altogether undeniable that human action does not proceed according to laws at all like those of nature.

As material civilisation progresses, the phenomena of the visible world are gradually transferred from the realm of caprice to that of natural law, until all the material universe is seen to be part of an orderly cosmos, a great realm in which effect follows cause with unvarying regularity, so that the man who can see so far into the ways of nature as to produce the cause is sure that the effect will follow. The astronomer proves by his calculations that the movements of sun and planets proceed according to fixed law. The chemist can tell to a certainty what result will follow if he mingles this and that substance: this proves the fixity of law in the physical world. Men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles; hence we know that the vegetable world also has its settled ways. And the

success which has attended attempts to vary domesticated species of animals is a proof that even in the breeding of animals arrangement is at least within certain limits possible, and therefore nature follows a clear and determined course.

But at every step upwards from the physical to the animated world the presence of fixed law grows less clear, and when we reach mankind it becomes comparatively faint and doubtful. It is true that unless there were uniformities in human nature, unless men's motives worked in a partly familiar course, anything like wise legislation would be impossible. The statesman who is to succeed must judge, and judge on the whole rightly, as to the effects of his laws. And though statesmen are very often mistaken in these matters, it must be allowed that a really wise and discerning man would scarcely be greatly at fault as to the general results of his legislation.

But this reliance upon the uniformity of human nature, while it is in place in dealing

with nations and communities, is out of place when it is a question of individuals. The wisest observers, the most intimate friends, of A and B cannot tell with certainty and precision what line of conduct they will adopt under given circumstances. There is an unaccountable, what may perhaps be called a miraculous, element in all conduct. Man cannot act without motive, but he has the power of choosing between motives, of dwelling on one rather than another until it acquires preponderant force. And he has the power of admitting or excluding the influence of the spiritual influences which lie around the springs of conduct. A man's will may well be compared to the sliding gates of the lock of a river, which may be closed against the stream, or freely opened to let it through. We are in daily and hourly contact with the spiritual world, and our characters in the main depend upon the kind of relations which we establish with it.

It is within the realm of human conduct and

character—a realm which, whether under law or not, is not under law which excludes freedom —that the province of prayer is included. The will of God as revealed in human life is not like the will of God as revealed in nature. And the experience of thousands, repeated day by day and hour by hour, leads us to think that the effect of prayer on human life and conduct is clear and indubitable. One may even venture to say that no prayer in regard to one's own character and doings is ever wholly in vain, if it be a real motion of the will and not the repetition of a formula. Can the same be said of prayers in regard to the character and life of other people? It seems to me that the recent movements of psychology tend to make this at least very probable, since they seem to indicate in no uncertain way that human personalities are not so rigidly walled off one from the other as some suppose. There would seem to be some communion between all spirits, and a profound spiritual substratum with which all personalities are in communion.

To use a physical analogy, the waves of spiritual force set in motion by prayer spread from soul to soul. And yet this physical analogy is misleading, because the waves on water spread according to physical and unvaried law; but in the spiritual world there is nothing of invariability, but a great variety of action the manner of which we are wholly unable to follow. We can only say that there is nothing whatever in our knowledge of the human world to lead us to think that prayer for others need be ineffectual. Prayers that the fixed laws of the material world may be violated on any special occasion are no doubt inadmissible. They not only, as experience clearly shows, produce no result, but they are contrary to the spirit of religion, since they imply that the will of God as revealed in the world of matter is variable, whereas it is known to be invariable. To pray that iron may float, or the sun go backward towards his rising, would be monstrous; and all prayers which ask for the violation of natural law are of this

character. But to pray for Divine influence in the human world is perfectly legitimate, since, according to our experience, there is a continuous and incalculable stream of spiritual influence flowing into the realm of human personalities.

A rough but very practical test of the legitimacy of a prayer lies in this: what is or can be matter of scientific prediction is not a fit subject of prayer. If we know or can calculate exactly what will result from certain causes in the visible world, then prayer of submission may be legitimate, but prayer expressing desire is not. It may seem strange, as a result of this distinction, that the sphere of legitimate prayer shrinks as the bounds of scientific prediction are extended; but, strange or not, this is the truth. We have, however, no reason to think that scientific prediction will ever invade the realm of human personality.

Before passing from this topic to the next, I must say a word on the difficult question how far the spiritual changes which can un-

doubtedly be produced by prayer react upon the body. This question takes in our day a very concrete form: whether faith-healing is possible. Most people know to what extent trust in faith as a remedy for disease has spread in recent years among such sects as the Christian Scientists and the Peculiar People. I shall not be able thoroughly to consider this matter, but perhaps I may be excused if I express my convictions in regard to it. The too great materialism which has ruled in our medical schools—the materialism which regards the spirit almost as a negligible quantity in relation to the body—has naturally given birth to a reaction which perhaps has gone to an extreme of fanaticism, regarding the spirit as everything and the body as its mere corollary, its unreal outward manifestation. This reaction, I say, is quite natural. And it is certainly based upon fact. I know from experiences which have come within my own observation that physical illness can be and often is greatly alleviated by what happens in

the spirit, and more particularly by the results of prayer. St James says, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick"; and I have no doubt that these words are as true to-day as when they were written. At the same time, to trust to prayer in such a matter rather than to the medicine based on long experience may easily become a mere fanaticism.

III

Thus, so far as the world of humanity is concerned, there is no reason whatever for supposing prayer to be ineffectual. But another and a more serious question remains —whether such prayer is legitimate. Is our ignorance and folly to attempt to guide the power and the wisdom of God? Do we really know what is good for us or for our friends? Is it not better, on the whole, to trust to the goodness of God, as revealed in the natural and spiritual worlds, rather than to besiege the Divine presence with multitudes of short-

sighted and often self-contradictory petitions? This is a view which is taken in our days by many high-minded, and even saintly, men, and yet I think that it is based upon false observations and theories; and while it appears to be the extreme of modesty, it really shows spiritual arrogance.

Prayer, looked at in a mere phenomenal way as a perpetual fact of the religious experience, is seen to consist of two kinds, or rather perhaps to hover between two poles, which are on the one side an endeavour to subordinate one's own will to the will of God, on the other side an attempt to induce the Divine Power to aid us in our endeavours to do what we desire in the world, or to be propitious to those to whom we are attached by affection. There is no rigid line to be drawn between the two kinds of prayer: logically, one can clearly discern between them; but in practice prayer is constantly fluctuating between the two extremes. If there were no personal desire in a prayer, it

would scarcely be human; if there were no element of submission to the Divine will in a prayer, it would not be moral or Christian.

It is to be presumed that even the doubters whom we are considering would approve of acts of devotion and submission to the will of God. Their doubt only applies to petitionary prayer.

The Founder of Christianity, and, after His example, all the great saints of the Christian Church, have taught that it is not only natural, but right, to ask not only for spiritual gifts in prayer, but also to ask things needful and desirable for oneself and one's friends; for daily bread as well as for daily strength; in fact, to ask in prayer such things as one would ask of a father ideal in wisdom and power. Such an attitude in mind and will seems to me above criticism. I would only add that we must remember that when the Founder of Christianity spoke of filial trust in and communion with God, the ideal of the fatherly relation which was before Him was a very lofty

and severe one. It is to be feared that the parental relation has in many places been of late years softened and even been degraded, and that many sons are accustomed to ask of their fathers and to receive, not what is good for them, but whatever they fancy they want. It is needless to say that, whatever be the plan on which the world is ruled, it certainly has no likeness to the government of a foolish and indulgent parent.

Regarding prayer, as we are now regarding it, from the psychological point of view, we see at once that it must stand in close relations with character and with intellectual outlook. Prayers framed at a different level from a man's nature have for him little meaning. Thus I do not think there is the least need to criticise the simple petitionary prayers of the majority of Christians. And I may add one or two considerations which may perhaps still further justify them.

First, then, it may be observed that a prayer is not a spell. In magic and witchcraft and all

the black remains of prehistoric superstition which have always existed by the side of purer religion it has been supposed that words of prayer have a force in themselves, that spiritual powers can be bent and driven by the will of man to do his bidding. It is scarcely necessary to say that in Christian prayer there is nothing of this; no Christian would suppose that, apart from the will of God, his prayer had any power. "Not my will, but Thine, be done," is an essential condition of it.

And, second, the habit of prayer certainly has a raising and purifying influence on the character. One sees in the history of religion how in all countries and all ages man approaches the Divine will in egotism, eager to secure for himself such and such advantages, and how by degrees his desires are purified so that his prayers take continually a loftier and nobler tone. If prayer went out into the void it would not be so: that it is so proves that prayer is a real communion with a real Power. Just as the man or woman who lives with

others of fine character grows better by the contact, so the heart is purified by the habit of prayer.

Surely it must have been the experience of many Christians that they have uttered a prayer in all sincerity and with full desire, and then in a few days have found that they have risen to a level from which they see that it was far better that the prayer should not be granted. It would seem that in the very action of prayer not only is the heart strengthened but also the eyes are enlightened, so that one can take a wider and a wiser view of one's surroundings. When the human will and the Divine come in contact, unless the human will be very stubborn and egotistic it is in some measure transformed, and proceeds at a higher level.

But, on the other hand, human nature sets a limit to this process. It may be that a few great saints, or a few men and women who have set aside all human ties and relationships, and live apart in monasteries, may reach a

point at which they are ready to merge all their petitions in the desire that the Divine will may be done. But such a point can scarcely be reached by any who live an active life in the world, who have parents and children, relatives and friends, who feel the natural desires of humanity and the duty of furthering their own undertakings.

It will be remembered that the Founder of Christianity, when He taught His disciples to pray, made a desire for the doing of God's will the primary petition; but He added to it a prayer for daily bread, giving a human touch to fit the prayer for ordinary mortals.

Prayer, as I have already observed, must bear a relation to the character of the petitioner. And he who prays only that the will of God may prevail must, to be consistent, have freed his life from all worldly cares and hopes, even from all worldly affections and interests.

It is necessary to insist upon this, because many people in our day are driven from the

habit of prayer by difficulties of a speculative kind, which may be thus phrased: "Since God is wiser than man, how dare we assume, in the Divine presence, that we know what will be good for us and others? and since the Divine will is better than the human, how dare we try to urge upon it the courses which to us seem the best?"

It seems to me that we here come in contact with such metaphysical and *a priori* modes of reasoning as are out of place since our ways of thought have become more positive and scientific. If we are to modify in some degree the simple Christian faith of past ages, as no doubt we must modify it, our grounds should not be some metaphysical and rationalist assumption as to the nature of things Divine, but a careful observation of the action of the Divine element in the world. Submission to the Divine will is, within certain limits, good; but what would become of the world if the best people persuaded themselves that they had only to acquiesce in the decrees of

Providence, and quietly wait to see God's ways vindicate themselves? To our observation, the will of God does *not* appear as moulding all events to a perfect end, whether we will or no, but as militant in the world, slowly making its way against sin and evil, or often apparently giving way before these powerful foes. It is our business not only to acquiesce in or hope for the Kingdom of God, but to fight for it day by day. We each of us have it in our power, in some minute degree, to thwart the will of God as revealed in the world, or to help it. The will of God works more or less effectually in the world accordingly as we receive or reject it. For it works through man; and every man can open or shut the gates through which the Divine influence flows into his heart and will.

Thus, though it be perfectly true that God is wiser than man, yet the wisdom of God has to be received into the human brain and to find course in human conduct. And though it be true that the Divine will is better than the

human, yet it is through the human will that the Divine will acts. And the will of a man is not a source of infinite energy, but a closely limited power, which is intimately dependent upon all sorts of human conditions. Thus it would seem that a man is justified in petitioning for anything which will increase his efficiency as a medium of the Divine will. And he is justified in asking for others whatever will expand and beautify their personalities. That what A asks for often cannot be attained without the denial of what B asks for is, of course, quite true: but, as I said before, a prayer is not a spell; it rests with a higher tribunal to decide between A and B. Meantime, each may pray, as he must work, according to the best light he has.

Thus there is nothing disquieting in the thought that when, for example, two Christian nations are at war, each is earnestly praying for victory. If a nation did not pray at all events for preservation, its spiritual life would cease. The soldier in the field will pray for

his own life; the nation, for the success of its arms. And the more far-seeing and wiser heads in the nation will be praying that, however the battle may turn, the national life may be preserved and the national character raised. On the supposition on which we started, that in prayer there is an actual relation to a living spiritual Power, there is nothing in all this to disturb our minds. There is truth in the Greek saying that, seeing one is a man, one must not be ashamed of feeling and thinking as a man. Nor need one be ashamed of feeling and praying as an Englishman, or as a Churchman, or as the father of a family, or as a man of business, provided the element of ultimate deference to the will of God be present. The worst of taking too lofty a line in these matters is that the aspirations are apt to be on quite a different level from the daily life; which is a fertile cause of hypocrisy. One puts away one's morality on a shelf, or leaves it in one's seat at church, and makes a shift

to live in the world without it. In a certain sense it is well to "hitch one's wagon to a star," but it does not do to trust to the star for actual progression. The great thing is that prayer should be on the level of the life, and part of the life; and then, of course, the higher its tone the better.

IV

A question which has long divided Christians is the lawfulness of prayer for rain or for fine weather. And with a brief consideration of this question I may well conclude, letting it serve as a touchstone for the views here set forth. On the one hand, rain and sunshine are facts of the material world, and so presumably matters of physical causality. But on the other hand, as is constantly impressed upon us by experience, it is quite impossible in the present state of science to foretell with accuracy the weather even of to-morrow. And one of our greatest men of science, in speaking of the

weather, has written words which demand careful attention.[1] "Does our physical knowledge authorise us in saying that the course of the weather is as much fixed as that of the planets in their orbits? I doubt it. There is much tending to show that the state of the atmosphere depends a good deal upon a condition of unstable equilibrium. . . . Now the nature of unstable equilibrium is that it is a condition in which the very slightest disturbing cause will suffice to start a movement which goes on accumulating till it produces a complete alteration of position. It is perfectly conceivable that a child, by lighting a bonfire, might produce an ascending current of air which in peculiar cases might suffice to initiate a movement which would go on accumulating till it caused the condition of the atmosphere to be widely different from what it would have been had the child not acted as I have supposed. It is not, therefore, by any means certain that the condition of

[1] Sir G. G. Stokes, *Gifford Lectures*, p. 220.

the weather is solely determined by physical conditions the effect of which could even conceivably be calculated beforehand."

To me, this reasoning seems to be quite unanswerable. If it be sound, then weather can never be a matter of scientific prevision, being in part produced by human agency. And since human agency is precisely the region in which spiritual forces act, prayer is in no way illegitimate as regards the weather. Whether such prayer is effectual in producing a result we can never know from observation, since we have to do with what is *ex hypothesi* a region in which we are unable to distinguish between the various causes which may have led to the result. If rain falls, we can never know how far it is a result of human agency and how far of regular atmospheric conditions. But we can, without hesitation, say that there is nothing formally illegitimate or impious in praying for rain or for fine weather.

There is, however, another reason against prayer for this or that kind of weather—

a reason on which a man of the greatest natural piety, Charles Kingsley, dwelt. Even if we suppose, for the sake of argument, that the prayer of man may be one of the determining elements in future weather, yet it is certainly only a very rash person who could suppose that he knew what at a given moment would be the weather which would be on the whole most expedient for a country or mankind. A man may know that present rain would be good for his own fields and those of his neighbours. But what may be the further effects of having rain instead of sunshine at a particular time and place he certainly cannot know. Those effects go on through all time. So he can scarcely judge what sort of weather at the moment will be for the eventual good even of his own farm.

Thus, though there does not seem to me to be anything shocking or impious in prayers for rain or for fine weather, yet the progress of knowledge tends to put them out of court. In days when the weather was not regarded

as resulting from a vast adjustment of physical conditions in a state of unstable equilibrium, then it was natural to ask of Heaven a shower whenever one seemed desirable. But as we realise that the effects even of a shower will go on and on, we begin to see clearly that in asking for a particular kind of weather we are wandering quite in the dark. It is such considerations as these which will, before long, condemn public prayers for rain or sunshine. They will, I think, be put out of court, not by the victory of atheism, but by the growth of a wider outlook. Men will be more disposed to take the weather as it comes, and by science and foresight, especially by the introduction of schemes of irrigation, to make the best use of it they can.

Briefly to sum up. Prayer is based on real fact and experience. The proper field for it is the human field, psychic and spiritual powers, and the working of these in the world of natural forces and of action. And

prayer should be in close relation to character: if this be the case, it will have power, not merely to raise the emotions and purify the will, but will even be the means of the revelation to man of the Divine will.

V

THE TRANSLATION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

My present subject, "The translation of Christian doctrine," may seem to be concerned rather with words than with things; but I shall enlarge the meaning of the word translation, and take it to refer not only to words, but to thought, and to the great realities with which religious thought has to do; and since I shall not be able in all parts of this discourse to keep apart the narrower and the broader renderings of the word translation, it will be well to begin with a few words in regard to them.

I

In spite of the close and constant intercourse which goes on between European nations, we

are yet all aware that there are words in each of our modern languages which cannot be expressed in other tongues. These words are usually deeply expressive of the character of peoples. They are full of suggestions as to history and race. For example, the English word gentleman has no equivalent abroad, and it is a proof that the English upper classes retained, while our modern language was forming, some of the fine qualities which should go with noble birth, but did not so often accompany it in France and Italy. The French word *ennui* expresses a habit of the restless and ardent French mind: the word which we have invented as a parallel, boredom, really expresses something different. In Germany, the land of philosophic abstractions, the word *Gottbewusstsein* has passed in some schools as a term for the essential element in religion; but what is conveyed to an Englishman by the translation God-consciousness?

These three obvious examples, which might

easily be multiplied, are sufficient to prove that translation from one language to another may be not merely difficult, but impossible; because words are intelligible as carrying with them various implications, historic and psychologic, which cannot be lightly carried from language to language. In the same way some poetry of an objective character, like that of Homer and of Scott, can be effectively translated into many languages. But no one can render in a foreign tongue the writings of an intensely national poet like Burns, or of a poet who, like Shelley, plays much on the associations and implications of words.

Starting from the translation of words, we have already passed from words to thought; for in fact all words, except those which represent visible and tangible things, are the product of thinking, and sum up the results of thought and experience. What I have said of the term *Gottbewusstsein* applies to most of the technical terms of German philo-

sophy. In France and England, German philosophy is understood but by few; it is not only written in a foreign language, but it is a foreign mode of thought, which has to be changed and inverted before it can really become part of the mental furniture of thinking men in other lands.

But there is a far greater and far more subtle difficulty that arises when we read the works, not of modern French and German writers, but of those authors who wrote in past ages. If they wrote in our own tongue, I think that scarcely one of us escapes the illusion of supposing that, because the words are familiar to us, the thought must be easily intelligible. Yet if we consider how circumstances have changed during the last century, how immense have been the alterations in our intellectual perspective, it must appear reasonable to think that the writings of our own ancestors of some centuries back must be at least as hard really to understand as those of our contemporaries in distant lands.

But finally, when the writings which we have to consider are foreign as well as antique, come down to us through great wastes of time and across the profound catastrophes which sever the successive strata of civilisation, then indeed we can scarcely hope really to understand them without a long and a painful discipline. As we have to learn the dead language in which they were written, so we have to learn the ways of thinking which dominated the writers, the kind of education which they had undergone, the nature of their outlook over the world of nature and of man.

I cannot at present develop this thought in detail. But I can briefly call attention to the manner in which the great difficulty of really understanding the writings of the ancient world clearly appears in our education. On me, in my career as a University teacher, it has been more strongly impressed year by year how imperfectly we succeed in our teaching of the Classics in carrying on the minds of

students from the mere languages and books of Greece and Rome to the understanding of the civilisation of Greece and Rome, to the Greek and the Roman way of looking at ethics and religion, art and science. Cambridge in this matter is more deficient than Oxford; but neither University comes up to the ideal set up by Matthew Arnold in one of his American addresses:[1] "By knowing ancient Greece I understand knowing her as the giver of Greek art; and a guide to a free and right use of reason and to scientific method, and the founder of our mathematics and physics and astronomy and biology; I understand knowing her as all this, and not merely knowing certain Greek poems and histories and treatises and speeches."

But if modern educated Englishmen very imperfectly succeed in really understanding Greek and Roman writers, through entering into their surroundings and seeing with their eyes, what shall we say of the interpretation of

[1] *Literature and Science,* p. 91.

the Bible in England? I am quite ready to allow that even the least instructed person, so he possess a spiritual capacity and a native wit, may draw from that inexhaustible well an almost infinite store of guidance and encouragement, of direction in life and of hope in death. There is noble truth in that fine verse of the 119th Psalm, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation." But when we are speaking not of practical wisdom, but of intellectual comprehension, then we must needs confess that to really understand the Bible one would need a far more thorough training than any to be found in our Universities; that a lifetime devoted to this purpose without stint and without hindrance would take one but a little way. The Bible is not a book but a literature; and none of the ancient forms of civilisation, from that of Babylon to that of Rome, has failed to leave deep impressions on it.

I fear that some readers may be wondering

whether the length of this introduction may not be out of proportion to its importance to the subject before us. But they will give up this fear if they will accept my view of the nature of Christian doctrine. We must not for a moment forget that Christian doctrine was originally expressed entirely in the languages of Greece and Rome: in words which, as I have said, summed up the results of ages of Greek thought and Roman experience. And, besides this, it has largely a Biblical basis. In origin it is a child of the contact of Jewish religion with Greek thought; but the breath of life is brought to it by great facts of history, by a life lived in Judea, and continued in the realm of the spirit after it had been eclipsed on earth. And religion being of all human things the most conservative, the doctrine of our own days is related to doctrine as originally formulated by a bond most direct and most unbreakable. Modern art is not content with the narrow limits which to Pheidias and Praxiteles

seemed sufficient. The modern drama is not so far from Shakespeare as is Shakespeare from Sophocles and Euripides. Even modern philosophy has moved on a vast distance from the systems of Aristotle and Zeno. But as to doctrine, ancient authority still largely holds. When Newman and his contemporaries brought in a great movement which has since had untold influence in the Church, to what did they make appeal? Not primarily to the facts of the religious consciousness, not to the works of Luther and Calvin, not even especially to the Bible, but to the early Fathers of the Church. Since then the High Church movement has found ways of appealing to the multitude; but at first it spoke specially to the learned, to whom the documents of the early Church were accessible. It thus begins to be clear that the interpretation of the doctrine of early Christianity is no easy task, but one needing the intelligence and the historic imagination of the ablest among us.

The Bible we have to take as it is: we cannot alter it or add to it. As it stands, it offers an unlimited field to the critic, the historian, the thinker. And it offers an unlimited field also to all, whether learned or unlearned, who have to live a life, and who have a soul within them. But doctrine is different. Doctrine is essentially an adaptation of religious truth to certain intellectual surroundings. Doctrine naturally changes its expression as systems of thought change. Doctrine requires translation: not merely to be rendered in the words of each language, but in phrases suitable to the conditions of each community.

Let me quote, in confirmation of what I have said, a passage from Dr Westcott:[1] "The co-ordination of dogmatic definitions with the historical circumstances under which they were framed often becomes of critical importance from the fact that terms and modes of expression outlast the systems of thought

[1] *Lessons from Work*, p. 69.

out of which they arose. The technical language of scholasticism, for instance, which is still widely current in theological discussions, is only to be understood rightly by reference to that type of the Aristotelian philosophy by which it was moulded. We use with little reflection such words as 'species' and 'form' and 'matter' and 'accidents,' forgetting that they ever carried with them precise conceptions more or less different from those which they now vaguely suggest. How few, to take the most signal example of all, who speak fluently of Transubstantiation ever pause to consider that the term is essentially bound up with a philosophical theory wholly foreign to our present modes of thought, so that it is practically impossible for anyone in the present day to hold the doctrine of Transubstantiation as it was held by the doctors at the Council of Lateran in the thirteenth century."

II

Doctrine of a developed and formal kind in the Church is mainly due, as everyone knows, to the initiative of St Paul, although I do not believe that doctrine, in the mind of the Apostle, took anything like so fixed and crystallised a form as most commentators suppose. It was fluid, and often inconsistent. How did St Paul set about its formulation, and what was his reason for doing so?

Had St Paul been purely a Jew, he would, perhaps, no more have set about stating doctrine than did Isaiah or the Psalmists. But at the beginning of our era the Jews, like all other nations of the known world, had been invaded and partly conquered by the spirit of intellectual investigation, which had taken its rise in Ionia, had been thoroughly acclimatised at Athens, and from Athens had spread into all countries. As an intellectual force, Greek philosophy can be compared to only one thing in the history of the West, and that one thing

is the spread of the scientific spirit in Europe during the last few centuries. Between Babylon and London, no man then could think speculatively without falling into Greek ways of thought. At Tarsus, where Paul was born, there was a school of the Stoic philosophy. But we have not to do with the influences of Paul's education so much as with the influences which affected his ancestors and his country. Doubtless no nation of the Roman world, not even Rome herself, offered so stubborn a resistance to the inflow of Greek influences as did Judea. But even Judea was not impervious. In the writings of Philo and others we see how Jewish and Greek elements of thought were combined; and the result of the combination was that each contributed to the other the elements which it lacked. Greece gave the idealism of Plato; Judea gave the very thing which was always lacking in Greek philosophy, a truer theory of the will. One of the noblest results of the contact, before the Christian era, was the Stoic philosophy.

Another result was the Pauline system of doctrine.

No careful reader of the New Testament can fail to be impressed with the gap which exists between the teaching of the historic Jesus as set forth in the Synoptic Gospels and the teaching of the Pauline epistles, although often under the striking dissimilarity of expression the same ideas persist.[1] What is the connection between the two? A current view is that Paul received from the companions of our Lord accounts of his life and conversation, and out of those accounts developed by argument and reasoning doctrinal views. Of this theory we can make short work, since Paul himself, in the Galatian Epistle, utterly repudiates it, and repudiates it with indignation. From the Apostles, as he tells us, he received certain facts as to the Master's life; but the substance of his faith he received by no tradition and from no human

[1] This is well set forth by Mr Scott in *Cambridge Biblical Essays,* edited by Dr Swete, 1909.

witness, but direct from his Heavenly Master, by revelation of Jesus Christ.

But this inspiration, this communion with the Divine, what is it? It is certainly not the communication of infallible truth. Infallible truth cannot possibly be conveyed in human words, for words are full of human weakness and folly. There are no better descriptions of Divine inspiration than those given in the Fourth Gospel. The Evangelist cannot express what he wants to express in one phrase, so he borrows from the thought-language, so to speak, of various races. With the Greek, he says that the Christian inspiration is the Word, the Logos. With the Persian fire-worshipper, he says it is light shining in darkness. With the Jew, he says that it is life. It is an overpowering force which comes from without, but which works from within, from the very centre of a man's being and personality, mastering his will and yet by mastering it making it stronger, kindling emotion with a sacred flame, illuminating the intellect with a

wisdom which is not of the world. It draws a man from the sensuous circumference of his life into its hidden centre, and from that centre sends him forth again with renewed power and goodness among material surroundings.

Let us come at once to the relations between St Paul's Christian inspiration and his system of doctrine. Here we have indeed translation in the less literal sense of the word. Practical impulses, the burning enthusiasm of a missionary, the profound faith and love and hope of a Christian, had to be set down in words intelligible to the intellect. St Paul had to explain to converts why the Jewish religion had never given him peace, and how in Christ he found that peace; what relation his Master's death and resurrection bore to the forgiveness of sins and the death of the lower self; how the corrupt human will could be by Christ purified and cleansed. All this he had to express in terms, and the terms must be such as would be intelligible to the minds of his contemporaries, that is to say, to men who

thought on the lines of Hellenistic Greek and Jewish philosophy. Had he been merely a Jew, he would perhaps have spoken only the language of poetry and prophecy; had he been only a Greek, he would perhaps have anticipated the shadowy speculations of Marcion and the Gnostics. But he was a chosen vessel, because there were united in him the two highest intellectual products of the time, the Greek doctrine of the reason and the Jewish doctrine of the will. Not only were these the highest products of the time, but they really contained the seeds of future, even of modern, systems of thought. And thus it came about that Pauline doctrine was fitted to become a lasting embodiment of Christian ideas, to present them in a form which, even after it had ceased to be fully intelligible, could yet be well rendered under later intellectual conditions.

The efficacy of Pauline doctrine as a vehicle of Christian ideas has been abundantly proved in the history of the Christian Church. Again

and again has a fresh intellectual embodiment of Christianity sprung from the study of the Pauline writings. Augustine, Anselm, Luther, Jansen, may almost be said, on the intellectual side, to be reincarnations of St Paul. Each of these great teachers took his start from the Apostle of the Gentiles and produced a neo-Paulinism suited to the circumstances of his own age. The well is deep, and has even yet not been exhausted. If Kant, Spinoza, and Plato may be recognised as at the bottom of the utterances of this and that thinker of our days, how much more may we expect from modern editions of the great teachings of St Paul?

But though the main principles of the Pauline construction are thus likely to abide with us as long as the Christian Church abides, yet that construction is anything but faultless. No one was better aware of this than the Apostle himself, who wrote, "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say," and wrote these words when he was speaking of one of

the most serious parts of all his teaching, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. As he says in another place, he, as a wise master-builder, laid the foundation, but on the foundation buildings of very varying degrees of value might be reared. After all, St Paul was a rabbi trained in the rabbinical ways of reasoning; and we see in the history of religion that no heavenly inspiration at a moment and miraculously changes a man's ways of thinking and reasoning. The heart, the will, may be suddenly cleansed and purified—of that there are a thousand examples in history—but the growth of intellect is slow and regular.

III

Let us take in order the two main sections of St Paul's doctrinal teaching—his Christology, and his Soteriology, or doctrine of sin and of justification. Speaking quite roughly and generally, one may say that Christologic doctrine was developed partly on a Pauline

basis by the Greek intellect during the first centuries of the Christian era, down to the days of Athanasius ; but the doctrine of human salvation was of later growth, and has been of greatest moment in the history of the Church since the days of Augustine. In all branches of the Reformed Church it has been the main and central support of the house of faith.

To the minds of many Christians the outlines of the Christology of St Paul have been blurred in consequence of our inveterate, our almost inevitable, habit of interpreting his statements in the light of later beliefs. If I give a sketch of the Pauline doctrine, I shall state it as far as possible in St Paul's own words. Jesus Christ, St Paul taught, was a heavenly Being, destined from times eternal for human redemption, in whom and through whom all things were created both in heaven and in earth. Being rich, for our sakes he became poor. Being in the likeness of God, he counted it not an object of ambition to be

on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore also, God highly exalted him, and gave him the name which is above every name, that every tongue should call him Lord.

This was the beginning of the making of theories as to the Person of Christ, which went on for centuries, the tide of opinion turning first in one direction and next in another. Dr Edwin Hatch writes: "Even after the elimination of Gnosticism, the Church remained without any uniform Christology; the Trinitarians and the Unitarians continued to confront each other, the Unitarians at the beginning of the third century still forming the large majority." Victory declared itself for the Trinitarians in the days of Athanasius; and the defeated party have since those days always been in a minority.

It cannot, I think, be denied that, tried

by the touchstone of the Nicene or other formulæ, the Christology of St Paul, taken in its obvious sense, would be found to be not merely defective but incorrect. It was possible by a skilful system of interpretation to avoid characterising it as such. As literary criticism applied to the New Testament writings grows keener and keener, it becomes harder and harder to regard the Christology of St Paul as identical with that to which the Church has as a whole been committed. If doctrine is to be regarded as objective assertion in regard to supernatural facts, how can the Church acquit St Paul of stating those facts incorrectly? In fact, Tertullian, in his controversy with Marcion, almost goes the length of calling St Paul a heretic.

But on the other, the relative view of doctrine, the matter presents no great difficulty. It would indeed be bold to accuse St Paul of heresy. But it is scarcely presumptuous to say that his translation into theory of the great facts of the spiritual life is

after all an imperfect translation. He exhibits to us aspects of truth; but his doctrines no more contain and limit the truth than do the formulæ of any of the Creeds. His doctrine of Christ, like the closely parallel Logos doctrine of the Fourth Evangelist, was in its form guided and determined by the Græco-Jewish speculation of Alexandria—a speculation to which angels and archangels, virtues and powers, embodiments of the divine wisdom and the divine reason, were matters of everyday familiarity and the subjects of never-ending metaphysical distinctions and constructions.

Let me, as regards early Christology, distinguish three things, which for convenience we may call the root, the stem, and the leaves. The root, the great fact, is the continuation upon earth and in the world of spirit of the life of Christ. For Christian doctrine there can be no foundation but this: apart from the life of the Church in Christ there would be no Christian doctrine to discuss. The stem is

such interpretation of this fact as accords with the unchanged principles of human nature, and so abides with us always. The leaves are the temporary expression in the language of successive peoples and the formulæ of successive schools of philosophy. But the tree in its growth has thrown out many shoots not destined to permanence; and the leaves are in fact always changing from season to season, and even from day to day.

In Christian doctrine a struggle for existence between various tendencies and ways of expression has always been going on. And as regards Christology we may perhaps venture to say without presumption that the doctrinal discussions of the first three centuries belonged to another kind of intellectual world from ours, and seldom convey to us definite meaning, though doubtless here and there a sentence may come home with profound suggestion.

The Greek theologians of the third and fourth centuries found in the discussion of the

doctrine of the Trinity an infinite field for the exercise of the intellect; they delighted in subtle distinctions and refined interpretations. Greek technical terms such as *οὐσία*, *ὑπόστασις*, *φύσις*, do not really admit of translation. When Tertullian formulated for the Western Church the doctrine that in God there was *una substantia* and *tres personæ*, he was translating Greek terms which had had a long and intricate history not only in the Church but among philosophers. But these very terms *substantia* and *persona* had in the concrete and matter-of-fact Latin language a very different aspect to that of the far subtler Greek words which they represented. The English words, substance and person, which one is obliged to use in rendering them, are really entirely different. The English mind is peculiarly unapt at fine metaphysical distinctions; and the English language cannot be made to convey them. The word person is specially misleading. Of all those who in Church repeat the phrases of the Creeds in which the Divine Trinity is

described, it may be doubted if any at all use those phrases in the sense in which they were intended. The few whose knowledge of early Christian doctrine is sufficiently profound to enable them to grasp the original meaning will probably feel that even what is true in them needs to be put otherwise. Perhaps to many the phrases will appear to be an assertion of such an approach to Tritheism as would have been branded by the almost universal consent of the early Church as heretical. There has been a talk of retranslating the Athanasian Creed: but in fact it cannot be translated; the English language does not contain words in which it could be rendered. We should be driven to speak of *hypostases*.

IV

Let us next turn to the other side of the Pauline doctrine, the side concerned with man and his salvation. Here we are more distinctly in the region of the knowable, of that

which can be observed and set forth in ordered language. But we could scarcely expect the first missionaries of Christianity to regard the essential facts and processes of the life of the spirit, then springing into sudden and glorious manhood, with the calm eyes of the scientific inquirer. To them everything was marvellous and unexampled, a sudden illumination of a new world of thought and feeling, a great and comprehensive revelation direct from God. The process of salvation daily going on in the Church was here the great fact of experience. St Paul's theory to explain that process was not simple but manifold, borrowing elements alike from Jewish, from Greek, and from Roman sources.

The Jews being a race not given to philosophic theorising, but apt to throw their explanations of spiritual truths into a mythic or a semi-historic form, it cannot be surprising that what St Paul took from this source took the form of a historic or quasi-historic doctrine. He taught that sin came into the world by

the transgression of Adam, and death by sin; but that the consequences of Adam's transgression, which appeared in the life of all of his descendants, were done away by the suffering of Jesus Christ. As in Adam, who was the ancestor of all men, all men sinned, so in Christ, the representative of all men, all may be saved from sin and death. The results of the fall of Adam were done away by the efficacy of the voluntary death of Jesus Christ. But St Paul is the last of writers to form a definite theory and to work it out in logical detail. It is not of what we call history that he is thinking. In other passages he seems to put the Law almost in the place of Adam's fall as the cause of sin in the race, until by the self-sacrifice of Christ it was made null, so that the dispensation of law gave way to the dispensation of Divine grace. And again, in another passage we have the harsh and startling theory that sin is, after all, a matter of Divine ordaining. "He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth."

Paul seems here to speak as if sin and salvation were the direct results of the Divine decrees; so that only the elect can escape from the tyranny of the Devil.

And then, parallel to these theories, which are essentially Jewish, we have another which is not only Jewish but partly Greek—in fact, a view which the contact of the Greek and the Oriental mind had produced in great Greek mystics, the notion that the flesh is the citadel of evil, that it acts as a clog upon the spirit, and tends ever to drag it down into the mire of sin and uncleanness. This view lies at the basis of what may be well termed Greek mystic theology, the religion of Pythagoras and the Orphic Societies. It was at the beginning of the Christian era widely diffused among the more pious of the Pagans; and everywhere in the Greek world there existed secret societies whose whole purpose was summed up in the desire of salvation from the impurity of the flesh, partly by the practice of asceticism, and partly by the

invocation of some Saviour-deity, through communion with whom the flesh might lose its corrupting power.

Further, it seems scarcely possible to regard as fortuitous the very remarkable approximations which the views of St Paul as to the condition of the Christian under grace show to the Stoic conception of the wise man, who was to be perfect and complete, happy amid persecutions and pains, a freeman in the midst of those who were slaves to their passions, above the reach of hostile anger. There existed, as we know, at Tarsus, a school of Stoic philosophy, the discourses of the leaders of which Paul may often in his youth have heard. The Stoic teaching would arouse quite as much indignation as assent in his mind, but nevertheless he might absorb something.

In the Soteriology of St Paul there are also Roman elements; and these were most important, not immediately, since for a long while the Greeks did the thinking of the Church, but later, when Christian doctrine was

fitting itself to the conditions of the Roman Empire, and of the barbarous kingdoms which were founded on its ruins. St Paul was a Roman citizen, and proud of being a Roman; and in his time some of the fundamental conceptions which lay at the basis of Roman law and were gradually formulated under the Roman Empire had already begun to influence thought even in Asia Minor. When St Paul uses such words as ransom, justification, propitiation, when he speaks of Christians as heirs of God, when he discourses of adoption and of testamentary dispositions, he is speaking of things dealt with in Roman law, and things which could scarcely be thought of except in the manner of Roman law. Even when St Paul speaks of law as distinguished from grace, though the Jewish ceremonial law is in his mind, the Roman civil law is often there also, urging the tendencies of his thought in this or that direction.

We are told that the inscription set up on the cross of our Lord was written in Hebrew

or Aramaic, and in Greek and in Latin. All these languages had course together in Palestine, and with the languages the ways of thinking with which those languages respectively went naturally. Every educated Jew of the time was necessarily trilingual; and one may fairly say of St Paul's Epistles that they are essentially trilingual.

Some of the disciples of St Paul so expanded and exalted some of the doctrines which seem naturally to belong to the Pauline scheme that we associate those doctrines rather with their writings than with his. For example, to the Writer to the Hebrews is due the working out of two of the great doctrines of Christianity—the view of the self-sacrifice of our Lord as a propitiation for the sins of mankind, and the belief that He remains as a priestly mediator between God and man. Whence immediately these doctrines came it is not easy to say, for the roots of both go back to the very beginnings of civilisation. The slaying of animals, or

even of human victims, to take away the guilt of sin, is a primeval custom; and the notion that the priest stands between God and man, representing God to man and man to God, is at the bottom of unnumbered rites of barbarous peoples. The Writer to the Hebrews baptized these primeval religious ideas into Christ, and made them a home in the bosom of the Church. He is a charming writer, full of beauty, of religious fervour, of inspiration; and his teaching has had a marvellous history in Christendom, chiefly because it was susceptible of many interpretations, from low to very high, and because it had on its side human feelings which had for untold millennia moved the heart of man and sustained his spiritual nature. Perhaps this writer beyond most needs fresh interpretation, and adaptation to a changed world of thought and belief.

V

When in the days of Augustine the centre of gravity of Christian thought passed from

East to West, a great change passed over the character of doctrine. In Augustine the genius of Latin Christianity became fully and consciously embodied. And then the subject of Christology became less prominent perhaps than that of the way of salvation. But the discussion of Soteriology was of another character. The subtlety, the lightness, the love of rhetorical antithesis which belonged to Greek doctrinal theorising gave way to a more serious and more practical spirit. The Church as a vast organisation stepped in to control the license of thought. The work of founding a new social order was too serious to allow her to give her best attention to mere theoretic lore. In place of the search for truth, she put the virtue of obedience; in the place of Scripture, her own regulations. And thus for ages she fixed on the nations of Europe a yoke, perhaps necessary to control their wayward youth, but becoming intolerable as they grew to maturity.

When, in the sixteenth century, the Teu-

tonic nations of Europe began their great revolt against the spiritual domination of Rome and Italy, the great leaders of the Reformation accepted in a very great degree the religious philosophy of the Church they attacked. What else could they have done? They had Plato and Aristotle; but the Church had long before converted Plato and Aristotle to Christianity and even to orthodoxy. They had the systems of the great Schoolmen; but these had been fashioned to justify the beliefs of the organised faith of Western Europe. Modern philosophy did not arise in Europe until Descartes, in the seventeenth century, determined to strip his mind of all beliefs which he could possibly deny, and to start afresh from the bare facts of human consciousness. Thus the doctrinal formulæ of Luther and Calvin and Zwingli, and of the organisers of the Anglican Church, were really drawn up on a purely mediæval basis. The appeal to Scripture was indeed allowed; and from that inexhaustible source of truth and wisdom was

derived the best of that which the great Reformers had to give to the world. But again, criticism was in those days in its infancy, and to treat the writings of the New Testament in any objective or historic way was impossible. Luther valued or neglected books of the canon, not on critical grounds, but by the light of his own feelings.

Surely, then, one may venture to say that the sixteenth century did not completely succeed in translating the formulæ of Christianity into the languages of modern Europe. As the Reformers commonly used for purposes of doctrinal statement the Latin of the Western Church, so they in the main retained the intellectual methods and the intellectual horizon of the Western Church. They expelled Latin from the public services of the Church as being not understanded of the people, but they retained many formulæ which, though put in modern words, belonged wholly to ancient systems of thought—systems which since their day have lost steadily in dominance.

In Germany, at the end of the eighteenth century there arose one great theological thinker of whom it may fairly be said that he gave a new character to doctrinal statement. I speak of Schleiermacher. I do not, of course, mean that all the German theologians since his day have been of his school, but merely that he marks an era, so that doctrinal discussions since his day have in point of method differed from those which preceded his day. He did for theology what Kant had done for philosophy—collected it into his own hand and sent it forth on a new career in the world.

In England we have certainly had no Schleiermacher. We have had no religious thinker who has in power of thought towered above the rest. The greatest name in the English theology of the eighteenth century is Wesley; the greatest name in the theology of the nineteenth century is Newman. But Wesley, at all events, was no great systematic thinker. It may be that to be a great systematic thinker is scarcely in the line of English

genius, though there are certain names which may be cited on the other side. However that be, the fact remains that though theological doctrine in England has necessarily felt the great changes which have come over the thinking of the world, yet the influences which have affected and swayed it have come from many sides, and have radiated rather from a number of remarkable personalities than from any dominant school of philosophy. Coleridge and Carlyle have probably as deeply impressed it as any other writers; and both Coleridge and Carlyle were perhaps rather interpreters of German thought than themselves great original thinkers.

Thus the history of religious thought has been much harder to trace in England than either in Roman Catholic countries or in Protestant Germany. It has had a hundred currents and eddies, has been affected by all kinds of scientific and ethical and social influences. It may be compared to a stream which has flowed, not between recognised

banks, but in a multitude of divergent channels over a flat plain. But the volume of water, to continue the metaphor, has probably been greater in England than anywhere. In no country of the world, probably, is there so great concern for religion as in our country. In no country is so great a force of will and character brought to bear on the problems of the religious life and on the doctrinal views which give the current solutions of those problems.

VI

It may be doubted whether the amorphous character of religious theory in this country is in all ways a disadvantange. Indeed, it would seem in some respects to be advantageous, as it disperses the interest of religious thought over a wide field and fosters the individuality, combined with reliance upon a higher Power, which has been the secret of the success with which the world-mission

of England has been hitherto carried out. But perhaps the advantage has reached its limit; and it may be that amid the rapidly changing political and intellectual horizons of our day a more unified and conscious intellectual appreciation of Christian doctrine may be a thing desirable, perhaps even a thing necessary, if Christianity is to be to us in the future what it has been in the past. Biologists tell us that the course of human evolution does not proceed at a uniform pace; but that there are times of crisis when a fierce and sudden pressure has compelled those races which were fit to survive to rise rapidly to a higher intellectual level. Our own day is such a time of crisis. No one who sees what is going on in the world, who keeps pace with the deeper notes of warning sounded by our captains of industry, our statesmen, our leaders in education and social reform, can be blind to the necessity which has come on us to set the house of our intelligence in order, and to learn to proceed in the future by surer methods than

have prevailed among us in the past. The warning applies to religion as well as to other sides of human thought and activity. We must make up our minds what we believe, and why we believe it; and we must make an effort to put our religious affirmations on terms with the rest of our mental furniture, if we would not run the risk of losing sight of those affirmations altogether amid the bustle and hurry of modern life.

The hard and closely reasoned doctrines of Justification, of Election, of Original Sin, and so forth, have by degrees lost their power in the world. Even among the orthodox Dissenters of England, nay, even among Scottish Presbyterians, they have somehow lost their primacy. If we examine the doctrinal works which have been recently published by influential members of the English Church, we find that their centre of gravity lies rather in the doctrine of the Incarnation than in that of the Atonement. The change is an important one. In any case, it is perfectly certain that

formed views as to the religious nature of man and his power of corresponding to Divine influences are necessary to any body of Christians who mean to hold their own amid existing surroundings. And in these matters a still greater change of method and outlook has taken place during the last century than is even the substitution of the philosophy which started with the Kantian criticism for Greek metaphysics. For the nature of man, even his religious nature, need not be taken on faith, but can be observed—is in fact matter of science. And in our days when any class of phenomena, physical or mental, lies open to observation, all ancient authority in regard to it, no matter how venerable, can claim but a subordinate place.

Religious psychology is a new study; and its very outlines are as yet scarcely traced. Its materials must be taken partly from the study of contemporary minds and movements, partly from the history of religion, or of the religions, in the past. Hence it will ascertain what in

fact takes place under these or those religious conditions. It will try to explain the past by what is observed in the present, and to call in the testimony of the past to supplement the phenomena of our own days. It will attempt to draw up schemes of the faculties of man and the way in which those faculties find exercise in the appreciation and reception of what is ever flowing into our little human world from the infinite ocean of being which surrounds it as the Milky Way surrounds the earth.

I am not going to pronounce a panegyric on religious psychology. My faith in the perceptive powers and the reasoning powers of mankind is by no means sanguine. And when one enters the shadowy recesses of the human soul the very light of day seems often only darkness. One may anticipate a number of utterly inadequate attempts to fathom the depths of the divine in man—attempts which may well by their poverty bring the whole literature of the subject into disrepute. Not

only now, but probably for a long time to come, the utterances of great students of themselves, like Augustine, Bunyan, Tauler, though unscientific, may be even to science of greater value than theories of man's spiritual nature which aim at being systematic. But for all that, with slow, uncertain steps, with many falls and failures, religious psychology must take its way, and by degrees it will emerge into a safer path.

When on a steamboat one passes down a river, one sees the water fall back from the banks in preparation for the great wave which follows the steamboat. It is, I think, by a similar automatic movement that the *theological* psychology of the Reformers is falling away in preparation for the future tide of *religious* psychology. And meanwhile, as is natural, all sorts of pale and eviscerated ghosts of the great sixteenth century doctrines of Substitution, Redemption, Justification, Election, are arising among us, to occupy in a temporary and partial way the vacant

place. What has here to be done eventually is to translate doctrine from the absolute tense of theologic affirmation into the relative tense of scientific hypothesis. But after all, the main facts on which observation will have to work are the same facts which are set forth in the language of sublime poetry by the Hebrew Psalmists, and in the language of philosophic rhetoric by Paul and Augustine. Now, as in the past, man has a soul to be saved; now, as in the past, he is utterly unable to save it by himself without Divine aid; now, as in the past, Divine aid is vouchsafed. All our theories cannot alter the essential facts: they can at best only explain those facts. Probably there will always be necessary a certain number of assumptions which cannot be verified. And just in the same way the theories of light, of electricity, of biology, are full of hypotheses which cannot be verified.

Thus, after all, it will be necessary to attach great value to religious history. Besides the psychology of observation, we need the history

of the Church as a practical guide. There will always be more venturesome schools which appeal with confidence to present fact, and more conservative schools which will tend to rely on tradition and the legacy of the past.

In particular, in this matter of translation, it is a very immediate and practical question whether we shall endeavour to form fresh formulæ, or whether we shall be content to reinterpret those which have come down to us. This is indeed a question too immediate and too practical to be here considered. The more conservative will be very unwilling to abandon any part of our inheritance of creed. There may be much to be said on their behalf. Yet in many cases this leads to unreality, to paltering with the conscience. The more courageous road may after all be the road of safety. Infallibility no more resides in the accepted formulæ of any church than in a pope or a sacred book. We have to distinguish between victorious doctrine and true doctrine. That a doctrine was in some past

age victorious proves, indeed, that it had some advantages over its rivals. And if we believe in the Divine control of history, we shall believe that usually and on the whole the advantage attaching to victorious doctrine was that it was more suited to what was best in Christianity at the time. Thus victorious doctrine must always carry a certain prestige; and for an individual to reject it on merely personal and subjective grounds would seem to be presumptuous. But again, the defeated doctrine may have lost the day because it appealed to too high a standard in man. And again, a doctrine suited to its own age may be quite unfitted for another. I do not mean merely in its expression—that will, of course, be soon out of date—but in its intellectual aspects and assumptions. Thus, though there is a certain presumption in favour of successful doctrine, there is no infallibility about it. The boasted test, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, is worthless, because there is no doctrine which will stand the test. It is

obvious enough that what is accepted by all cannot be denied by any.

True doctrine seems to be definable as that which accords with the essential facts of man's spiritual surroundings in relation to his nature. Thus it seems that no statement of doctrine can be true save generally, or in the spirit, for no formula, no words, can permanently embody it. If such doctrine is expressed reasonably and in full accordance with the intellectual conditions of a particular age, it is true for that age, even in its words; but the truth is after all not to be taken too literally. If even a truly formulated true doctrine be taken as if it were an axiom in Euclid or a formula in logic it cannot endure the test. At best man can but adumbrate in words any Divine idea; he cannot enclose it in words.

Perhaps the clearest of the lessons to be derived from our brief and slight examination of doctrine is the need of tolerance and charity. Especially in an age of change and transition like ours the chances of going wrong in the

expression of doctrine for anyone who is not content with current formulæ are almost infinite, and the hope of being wholly right is very slight. Anyone who is determined that he has religious truth enclosed in a set of formulæ, and that all who differ from him are mistaken, becomes a sort of monomaniac. It has been well said that the community which tries to make itself the exclusive depository of truth only succeeds in cutting itself off from the real Catholic Church. Let us hold our beliefs as strongly as we can, but let us not confuse our beliefs, which are limited, with truth and reality, which are infinite.

I think that no art is more useful to a Christian of this day than the art of mental translation, of transposing religious utterances from one key to another. No man who has given careful personal thought to religious questions can attend any religious service, in an Anglican church or elsewhere, without hearing some things of which he does not approve. It might be well in such a case,

instead of encouraging the spirit of hostility, to stimulate that of charity. Very often one may find that an assertion which offends one is after all only a clumsy translation of a fine spiritual aspiration or a real experience of the soul. The formula, whether in the prayer-book, the hymn, or the sermon, may after all only show that the writer had a different sort of education from the hearer.

In the Church of Corinth there was much speaking in unknown tongues, and St Paul suggests that, when this was the case, someone should interpret in Greek. In our churches many unknown tongues are spoken—the language of Neo-Platonic philosophy, the language of Jewish Messianic hope, the language, it may be, of dim and primitive beliefs which were hoary in the days of Plato and of Isaiah. Should we not at least make an attempt to interpret? The strain put upon us by the excessive conservatism, the religious timidity, of the English Church ought to be diminished. If every man is to interpret for

himself, the great majority will fail to interpret intelligibly. That there are great difficulties in the way no one can doubt. But at least the hope of in some degree restating Christian doctrine is one which every Christian is bound to cherish ; and towards the fulfilment of that hope he is bound to struggle as opportunity may be given him. Nor need we take a despairing tone in the matter. The leaven is working all around us. Those who are past middle age cannot fail to have noticed that a movement in the direction of greater freedom of thought and word is slowly working in all the churches—working for good, and, alas, in some directions inevitably for evil. If we look behind us we notice many partially successful attempts at the restatement of Christian doctrine, and we may hope that by degrees, by the additions of many contributors, perhaps more often indirect than direct, the work will be brought to a worthy consummation.

VI

THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

It is generally allowed by liberal Churchmen that at the present time there is great need of some reconstruction of doctrine, if doctrine is to occupy in the Christianity of the future a place of any importance. But most of them seem to shrink from the attempt at such reconstruction. A very able and liberal theologian writes: "Those who speak most of the re-formulation of the Faith do not appear to me to be the men who know the past." Any effort in this direction meets with severe critics and few friends. And, what is far worse, it is almost sure to be exceedingly partial and incomplete. Doctrine has been

in the past evolved rather by the life of the Church than by the quiet meditations of individuals, and any satisfactory formulation of it is likely to come from those who have acquired a right to express the voice of the Church.

I

Let me begin a brief discussion of the basis of doctrine by citing a definition of it by one of the greatest of modern Churchmen, Dr Westcott.[1]

"Christian doctrine is at any time the present intellectual appreciation of certain actual events. It is not based upon a mythology which must fade away in the fuller light. It is not bound up with a philosophy which answers to a special stage in the progress of thought. It is an attempt to seize the meaning of occurrences which are part of the history of mankind."

While I should in a general way accept

[1] *Lessons from Work*, p. 77.

this statement, it seems to me by no means free from ambiguity. Are the events which lie at the roots of doctrine the facts recorded in the Gospels or the facts of the continuous Christian life? Probably Dr Westcott would include both. But the history contained in the Gospels, though of course in a less degree than Old Testament history, is certainly mixed with what may in a sense be called mythology. A permanent basis for doctrine can only be found in historic facts the evidence for which is beyond question, the realities of the permanent life of the spirit. And again, in maintaining that doctrine must not be made dependent upon particular schemes of philosophy, Dr Westcott doubtless states a truth. Yet the actual form taken by doctrines in various ages must needs be greatly influenced by the current philosophic views. It is only the spirit or essence of them which is permanent. Yet, taken broadly, Dr Westcott's statement is true. The first and most fundamental point in all re-formula-

tion of doctrine seems to be that it must take its start less from historic record, and less from metaphysical principle, than from experience.

In saying that doctrine cannot be primarily based on historic record, I do not, of course, mean that it is cut loose from the past, or that the history of religion is to us unimportant. On the contrary, as I shall presently insist, history must play an enormous part in any rational form of doctrine. To us history must be of infinitely more account than it could possibly be to those who were unacquainted with historic method and did not discern between fact and fable. To no mind trained in modern methods can any fact, whether of the present or the past, be indifferent or unmeaning. Yet to proceed in the time-honoured manner, to take the crude fact or supposed fact of the Christian origins, and to build it into a structure of doctrine, is an illegitimate proceeding. It is illegitimate for two valid reasons. Firstly, because the

actual objective fact desiderated is seldom or never to be had. Modern critical methods have dispelled the notion that it is possible in ancient history to ascertain the simple objective fact, save in certain cases. We can only reach probability, not certainty; we can discover what was believed to have taken place rather than what actually took place. And secondly, even if we could draw up a list of objective facts in religious history, they would be found to be in themselves colourless. They would contain no doctrine: doctrine would have to be added to them by imagination and belief. This is clear if we take the simplest of examples. That Jesus Christ died on the cross may fairly be considered, in spite of difficulties raised by a few objectors, as a definite fact of history. This fact may serve as an attachment to which doctrine may cling; but in itself it involves no doctrine. "Crucified under Pontius Pilate": to this Tacitus would subscribe as readily as St Paul. But the fact only becomes related to doctrine

when we add to it what is not mere fact of history: "Crucified *for us* under Pontius Pilate." There indeed we have doctrine; and the doctrine conveyed in the words "for us" is not merely detachable from the fact, but it has been so detached by thousands of Christians, who have based it rather on spiritual experience than on historic evidence of the nature of which they have been ignorant.

Nothing, indeed, endures as permanent foundation for doctrinal construction save observation and experience. And the realm of observation may be readily divided into three main provinces: the physical world, the world of consciousness, and the world of history. In some matters, more especially as regards the being and attributes of the Creator, appeal has from antiquity been made to the testimony of the works which He has created. And in modified ways such appeal still lies open to us, is indeed inevitable in the case of every man of science who has imagina-

tion and ideality. The Founder of Christianity was very fond of appealing to processes and phenomena of the visible world as being a mirror in which we may trace the action and the love of the Father in heaven; and the example which He set is one especially attractive to an age so bent as ours towards the pursuit of physical and biological studies. Yet, after all, the visible world can throw but little light on the deeper phases of religion, can but furnish us with hints and suggestions. Far more important, with a view to the formulation of doctrine, is that psychology which studies the mind and heart of man. It is here that we most completely differ from the early founders of the Christian religion. The world of sense lay open to them, though they did not see so far beneath its surface as we. But in the ancient world it was men in cities and communities rather than the individual that counted: man had scarcely learned to regard himself as a microcosm in many ways reacting against the world, as not

merely contained in that world but in turn containing it. For good or for evil, mankind has become self-conscious. What the ancients did by an inner impulse we do of set purpose; what they knew confusedly in regard to human nature we know methodically, or at least we are studying by method. To use a bold phrase, God is committing to man more and more every year the rule of the world and the guidance of society; and man is obliged to try to discover what are the limits of his own powers and what the laws of his own development.

In introspective psychology there inhere very great dangers. It cannot be completely successful; but there are methods by which the weaknesses which cannot be wholly removed from it may be lessened. I speak at present of psychology in relation to religion, though the same observations would apply to other aspects of psychology. Religious psychology, then, may be extended in scope and made far safer in its results if with the

analytic method we combine those of anthropology and of history. We have to correct or to confirm the psychologic views drawn from the phenomena of our own Church or our own country by extending our observation to the lands where other religions prevail. And we have to draw largely upon the reservoirs of spiritual experience stored up in the memoirs and the writings of persons of unusual insight and genius in matters of religion. Above all, we have the history of the Christian Church, from the day when the Apostles were called to become fishers of men, down to our own days. That history is no random collocation of events, but an orderly development; though sometimes, it must be confessed, periods of materialism and retrogression intervene between the brighter patches. But the spirit of the Founder has never wholly deserted the society. A hundred times the flame of the spiritual life has burned low, but it has always revived. Thus, to every Christian, the history of

Christianity becomes a vast storehouse of truth and of wisdom, mingled, of course, with baser elements. As Plato in his *Republic* tried to make clear the nature of man by studying the working of an ideal society, so in the history of the Church the main facts of the spiritual life are set out on a nobler scale and with clearer lessons for us all. Particular facts in the history of the Church may be very doubtful; their acceptance or rejection depends upon evidence; but about the main lines and tendencies of that history we can safely assure ourselves.

II

It appears to me that the whole complexion of doctrine in our days must be essentially psychologic, must take its start from facts of human nature. Doctrine consists mainly of three sections: the doctrine of God, or Theology proper; the doctrine of Christ, or Christology; the doctrine of man, or Soteri-

ology. Now a system of doctrine which starts from the records of history will put Christology in the first place; a system of doctrine which starts from the facts of the visible world will put Theology in the first place; a system of doctrine which starts from the facts of human nature and man as a religious being will put Soteriology in the first place. These three species of doctrine have each in turn held supremacy in the Christian Church, none of them ever to the exclusion of the others. To speak quite roughly and generally, Christology mainly occupied the Christian society, and particularly the Greek section of it, down to the fourth century. Soteriology was later in development, and belonged mainly to the Western branch of the Church, and was again dominant at the time of the Reformation. Theology proper has usually been less prominent; but generally in the eighteenth century, for example, it overshadowed the other species of doctrine.

Probably, under modern conditions, Soteri-

ology must hold the pre-eminence. I am not sure that if we look round us we should at once feel this to be the case. The Church, at all events in our country, is far more fully occupied with attention to the temporal and social needs of men than with their spiritual health. This is, however, a temporary secularisation of religion; and the more enthusiastic forces of Christianity, such as the Methodists, certainly concern themselves largely with matters of Soteriology. However that be, it seems clear that the spiritual nature of man will be the primary subject of religious doctrine in the century which has begun.

It is our business, in the broader, whiter light which floods the twentieth century, clearly to discern, and methodically to arrange, elements of life which by our ancestors were rather felt than known, but which often lie deep, near the very roots of our being. In order that we may do this we must needs use critical methods; but we must beware of thinking that criticism neces-

sarily leads to negation. There is a rationalist criticism which examines everything from the lofty height of its own conceit, rejecting all that does not happen to have an obvious reason and an immediate justification. And there is a scientific or historic criticism which is full of caution and of reverence, which recognises that for all phenomena which have appeared in the world there must be a justification of some sort, and that what has been nobly thought and strongly felt in the past is almost sure to have roots going down to what is best and most durable in man.

One may cite a recent example. Few of the superstitions of the Middle Ages seem to us more degrading, few more indefensible, than those connected with the earnest desire to possess the actual bodies of saints and martyrs. Undoubtedly this desire has led to deeds which cannot but be condemned, and to gross materialism in religion. Yet recently, when the body of Mr Rhodes was

laid to rest among the rocks of the Matoppo Hills, in the midst of the land which he really cared for, none could fail to feel that the interment, though of a dead and decaying body, had real meaning, and that the dead hand of the great statesman would really guard the Matoppo Hills. For no view of human nature could be more faulty or more shallow than the view which regards it as swayed only by material advantages, and moving only on the lines of reason. Feeling, sentiment, imagination, the ghosts of dead beliefs, sway us often far more than the things which can be seen and measured.

In the eighteenth century the theistic rationalism of writers like Gibbon and Voltaire rejected with contempt what they regarded as the exploded superstitions of popular Christianity. But before long the progress of philosophy revealed the fact that the doctrines which refined theism guarded as based on reason really rested on a base hardly more solid than that which upheld

the doctrines which they scouted as irrational. In these days any man who wishes to proceed reasonably moves with infinitely more caution, and knows better than to set aside ancient beliefs merely on subjective or rationalistic grounds.

If I venture to speak briefly of the doctrines of soteriology as based on fact, I would do so with all humility, as one merely trying to arrange facts in a particular light.

The great and essential realities which lie at the roots of all soteriologic doctrines are three. First, that man has a natural sense of sin, which may be in individuals stronger or weaker, but which tends to be very keen in those who are most alive to spiritual realities. Second, that the load of sin can only be removed by a change of heart—the change which by Christians is commonly called conversion, but which may be either sudden or gradual. Third, that no man by his own strivings can bring about this change, but that it is wrought in him, not in defiance of

his own will, but by a kind of absorption of it by a higher Power.

I am aware that there are among us some writers who regard these primary facts as not fact, but fancy. I cannot at present attempt to confute them. I can but refer them to statistics like those of Mr Starbuck, or to James's *Varieties of Religious Experience.* To prove the reality of spiritual fact is indeed almost as difficult a task as to prove to a blind man that the material world is full of colour. Victor Hugo has observed that some men deny the infinite; some, too, deny the sun, they are the blind. When we find certain moral conditions existing in a rudimentary form among savages, clearly seen in civilised nations, strongly marked in the noblest of human beings who have ever lived, I do not think that we need pause to prove that they are natural to man as man.

If this brief sketch of the root-facts of the religious life be at all accurate, we shall see that some of the great doctrines of Christian

soteriology have profound roots in human nature. They may be revealed doctrine—indeed, all true doctrine is revealed—but they can be justified in their essence by an appeal to fact. I say in their essence, because as they stand in our creeds and confessions and articles of religion they are mixed up with a great deal of mythic history and abandoned philosophy. The ninth, tenth, and eleventh Articles of the Prayer Book might be regarded almost as an abstract of what I have said. But they add a setting some parts of which are disputable. They assume that Adam was historic, and the progenitor of mankind: that is a Jewish element. They assume that the *phronêma sarkos*, as the Article puts it, is opposed to the Divine influence, which is an element mainly taken from the mystic religion of Greece. And further, they give to the teaching a Christian form, holding that the grace of God is given to men in consequence of the obedience and death of the Founder of Christianity. No doubt in the past this

essentially Christian element has been inseparable from the doctrine of Divine grace, and to the great mass of Christians is still inseparable from it. Yet there can be no doubt that separation is, from the logical and psychological view, possible, whether or not it be possible in the practical life of the Church. Into these matters I cannot at present go further: they would involve Christologic discussions.

Let us pass to a doctrine taught in another Article of the Church, that of Election. This teaching is somewhat archaic in form, and probably few even of those who enter the ministry really accept it. But the noteworthy thing about it is that it has but a veneer of Christianity. The Article speaks of election in Christ, but the phrase does not go deep. The doctrine as taught by St Paul is taken straight, metaphors and all, from the writings of Jeremiah. It is Jewish in origin, but it has parallels among all peoples. The notion of Divine predestination plays a very important

part in the theology of Islam. Belief in fate in Greece sometimes quite overshadowed the belief in the gods. And very many of the men who have made the greatest name in the world —Cæsar, Napoleon, Cromwell, or, to come to our own times, Napoleon III., Bismarck, Gordon, Rhodes—have accepted in some form the doctrine of destiny or predestination.

Of course the doctrine in passing through the brain of St Paul into Christianity took definite colour and form. He teaches not merely that men are destined to success and failure, to happiness and misery, in this world, but that eternal happiness is only for those who are chosen in the eternal purpose of God. At least this is the belief expressed in some passages in the Pauline letters. But it does not dwell in the Apostle's mind, or really tincture his theology. He never tells his converts that it is useless for them to attempt to lay hold upon life unless they are thereto ordained. It is at bottom only an intense conviction that he himself was called

and preordained by Divine purpose for certain ends. And what he feels in his own case he feels bound to assume as a general experience.

We cannot hesitate to say that though the doctrine of predestination has often in the world assumed unlovely and unworthy forms, though it has been to sensitive souls the cause of unmeasured pain and anguish, yet at bottom it is based upon experience and reality. This doctrine, in varied forms, is an attempt, or a series of attempts, to explain what is a fact of vast import and sublime majesty—that the destinies of men are arranged and swayed by a Power mighty beyond our dreams and wise beyond our imagination, who does place them as chessmen are placed on a board, and makes it impossible for them to move save in certain directions.

The complementary doctrine, that of reprobation, I take to be the result of applying logic where logic is powerless. St Paul did not hold the view that the non-elect were destined to endless punishment; he only

thought that such might fail to grasp the life in Christ and so altogether lose the future life, which belonged only to Christians. But when, later on, it was believed that the dead were divided into two rigid camps of the saved and the lost, then the theologians who held the doctrine of election were driven to believe also in the doctrine of final reprobation. For us, the great day of judgment, that nightmare of the slumber of the Middle Ages, has lost its definite and dramatic character. We reject cataclysmic views, and hold that the future life must have close relations with the life of the present. Thus for us any doctrine of destiny or election must have quite a different setting from that of Augustine and Calvin. We shall not accept the analogy of the clay and the potter, because a vessel of clay is dead, and we are alive. But we may still believe that to every man at birth there is assigned a task, that every life has an ideal aspect interpenetrating its visible manifestations. And we may believe that accord-

ingly as each of us does the allotted task, and succeeds in making the actual life resemble the ideal life, in that degree each of us is partaker of salvation; but yet, after all, it is not we that can attain the ideal, but the ideal which works itself out in us, shining in our darkness, strengthening our feeble wills, and heating our languid desires. This is, in reality, a modern transcript of the old doctrine of election.

III

We pass next from the soteriologic or human side of doctrine to the doctrine of God, or Theology proper.

I think it could not be denied by any thinking man that the view of God held by any religiously minded person in our days is in some ways vastly more lofty and severe than any views which were possible to the early Christians. On some sides—those relating to feeling and conduct—it may be that the last words as to the Divine nature

were uttered in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago. The nature of conduct and of feeling, which is inchoate or truncated conduct, does not greatly vary from age to age. But on the intellectual side we have made enormous progress. Those two artificial senses, the telescope and the microscope, have entirely changed our notion of creation, by introducing us to the immeasurably vast and the inconceivably minute. The world has ceased to be the centre of the visible universe, and now seems to us, with all its glory and splendour, almost like a mote in the sunbeam. Man on his physical side, while a marvellous production, is yet beyond expression weak and limited. Various recent writers have set forth, perhaps none more ably than the author of *Natural Religion*, the view of God as it slowly impresses itself upon the pious worker in the field of natural science. He becomes a severe, almost a Puritan, monotheist. "If we will look at things and not merely at words, we shall

soon see that the scientific man has a theology and a God: a most impressive theology, a most awful and glorious God. I say that man believes in a God who feels himself in the presence of a Power which is not himself and is immeasurably above himself: a Power in the contemplation of which he is absorbed, in the knowledge of which he finds safety and happiness."

Thus wrote Professor Seeley. But while we are all in some degree swayed by the severe theism of the astronomer and the chemist, we must not forget that the true revelation of God must always be to the inward rather than to the outward eye. Nature can never by herself give us a full or final revelation of the Creator. The poets of nature, such as Wordsworth and Ruskin, throw over nature an imaginative haze of their own. Many of those who closely study evolution in the world see in it the working of something which, to compare great things with small, may be likened to human choice and

purpose. But even the poet of nature and the reader of design in the world would not look among things visible for traces of the Divine unless they had already found such traces in their own hearts and lives. The final witness to God will always be found in the words of Augustine: "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it find rest in Thee." Reading these words, one may imagine that Augustine had risen above the local and temporal in religion to the essential truth of it. Yet Augustine, in another place, gives a version of the same aspiration which may serve to show that we have moved since his day. "Our rational nature," he writes, "is so great and good, that there is no good wherein we can be happy save God."

What a bathos we have in these words. And they serve to emphasise the fact that it is not only by our profounder knowledge of nature that our idea of God has been lifted up. The fuller and deeper tide of human life which has flowed since the world emerged from

the swaddling-bands of the Middle Ages has not only given us truer notions as to human nature and its possibilities, but also has raised and refined our ideas of Him in whose image man was made. The teaching about God uttered by Jesus and by some of his followers, who draw their words straight from the experiences of the spiritual life, are beyond criticism. And the great mystics who have from time to time arisen speak to all the ages. But when we come to those who have formulated doctrine, we shall find that most views of the Divine nature which come down to us from the ancient world, and even from the Middle Ages, are coloured by two false ways of thinking. First, it was the inevitable tendency of all who had been trained in the Platonic philosophy, that is to say, of most educated people, to think of God as revealed to reason rather than to will and to love. They tended to regard the Deity as the sum of thought, to be known only through contemplation and meditation. And second, they

were under the sway of that subtle essence of the Hellenic spirit, Greek rhetoric, with its love of balance and contrast, of measure and counter-measure. All literary style, from the days of Thucydides to almost our own times, whether in history or philosophy, art or poetry, has been in a degree rhetorical; and the rhetorical spirit is absolutely and irreconcilably opposed to the spirit of science. Rationalism and rhetoric have been the two chains wherewith the Church has been bound from almost the first, and from which she is only beginning to wish to be loosed.

I would not be misunderstood as saying that it was a fault in the Church to accept these limitations. Here I think some of those writers with whom I have the closest sympathy, both in England and in Germany, have been unjust—men such as Harnack and Edwin Hatch and Matthew Arnold. As a soul cannot work in the world unless it inhabit a body, as the wisest of men cannot speak without using the words of some particular

language, so the Church, being obliged to come to terms with people of educated intelligence, was compelled to use the kind of speech with which they were familiar. What I do say is, that since we have cast away the limitations of Greece in other realms—in physical science, in poetry, in psychology, even in philosophy —we must be prepared to reject them also in theology, or our theology will remain dead among living studies. Our theology must be prepared to advance and to aspire until it conforms to what is loftiest and most severe in the suggestions of modern science, as well as to the highest results of the ideal philosophy which Plato founded, and the passionate aspirations of the Hebrew Psalmists and other great religious poets of the past.

On the third great branch of the tree of doctrine, Christology, I clearly cannot enter at the end of a paper already sufficiently long. To this subject, the most difficult and dangerous of all, I devote a separate paper.

In conclusion, I wish to make an observation which goes to the root of all doctrinal construction. Doctrine has relations not only to the facts of our environment, physical and spiritual, but also to action amid those facts. And indeed it is more closely related to action and to feeling, which is inchoate action, than to knowledge. Thus, although a critical study of history is a necessary preliminary to the formulation of doctrine, and though religious psychology is a corrective constantly applied to doctrine, yet doctrine itself cannot be reached either through history or through psychology. Doctrine is the direct intellectual embodiment of life, and no corollary from any series of observed facts. The soil and the climate condition the growth of the plant, but they do not create the plant, nor furnish it with that inner vitality whereby it grows amid its surroundings and uses what surrounds it for its own purposes.

Thus we reach a distinction—a far-reaching and essential distinction—between the study of

doctrine and the belief in doctrine. It is the same distinction as exists between science and art in all their phases, between the study of mechanics and the construction of a machine, between the study of painting and the production of a picture.

Science and method will not help us in the choice of purposes and principles of life; but when we have formed our purposes they will help us to attain them. The knowledge of religious psychology will not compel us to accept this or that doctrine; but it may help us to ascertain how a particular principle of religion has been embodied in doctrine in the past. And it may even show us how this embodiment must be changed to fit it to modern intellectual conditions: it may discern between the doctrinal path which ends in a blank wall and the path which avoids all insuperable obstacles.

VII

THE BASIS OF CHRISTOLOGY

The doctrine of Christ is at once the most important and the most interesting subject for religious consideration. It is also the most difficult. At every turn, one is likely to wound the sensitive feelings of Christians. Caution and reticence are necessary; and yet too great caution may also be a snare, and becomes absurd at a time when the most immoral and abominable doctrines are daily published in the magazine and proclaimed in the market-place.

When the two carbons of an electric lamp are placed near together there flashes between them an arc of intense light. In the same way, the Christology which has been from the

first the light of the Christian intelligence seems to be an attempt to draw together and to reconcile two sets of facts.

I

At the beginning of the book of *Acts* we have a speech said to be that uttered by St Peter on the day of Pentecost. It is, of course, quite foreign to the customs of writers of history at that time to give *verbatim* reports of any words publicly uttered. That custom is indeed of very modern date, and connected with the existence of a class of men whose business is the reporting of speeches. The ancient historian gives at most the substance of the speech uttered, thrown into a dramatic form suitable to the speaker. Of this dramatic reproduction Luke is a great master. So this speech of St Peter, whether close or not to historic accuracy, reproduces in a striking way the point of view of the Apostles shortly after the crucifixion of their Master. The speaker

connects the time before with that after the crucifixion with notable simplicity. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, ye by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This was the first message of the Apostles to the world. To a modern reader there is something almost harsh in the contrast between "Jesus, a man approved among you," with which the passage begins, and "God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." There is nothing said here of a miraculous birth, nor of a calling at baptism; but the earthly and the heavenly life are placed side by side like the leaves of a diptych. On one tablet we see a human figure, gracious and beautiful, a wandering prophet at the head of a band of disciples; on the other, a radiant spiritual being, crowned with glory, seated high on a celestial throne.

Yet the two tablets are inseparably joined. We are reminded of a like phrase in *Hebrews*:[1] "We see Jesus because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour."

Not very different are the words in the *Epistle to the Philippians*, which I have already quoted, though St Paul adds a certain amount of theory, or theology, to the historic view:[2] "Christ Jesus, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name." I have not quoted the whole of these passages, but only so much of them as may fairly be regarded as a summary of the actual history of the Christian Church. They set forth clearly the two parts into which that history must be divided: the earthly life of the Founder, and His exalted life in the Church. And they lay emphasis on the power which joined these two into one, the

[1] Heb. ii. 9. [2] Phil. ii. 6.

only power which could join them—the determinate purpose of God.

That the joining was the work of God, the greatest work which even the Author of the Universe, visible and invisible, has within our knowledge effected, is part of Christian belief. But as to the way in which the power of God worked in this case, there may be, and there are, many theories. It is indeed the birthplace of all views of Christianity and of the Church. It is the testing-place of theological constructions.

If the eleven Apostles had been asked how they knew that their Master was arisen, and working with them in their work, they might probably have answered that they were sure of it because He had appeared to many of them in bodily form. For there can be little doubt that this was a general belief among them, although the accounts which have come down to us of such appearances are in an extreme degree confused and inconsistent. These accounts, as we have them, add details

which would convince a Jew of the time, by stating that the Lord appeared to the Apostles with wounds still unhealed, and with hunger which could only be appeased by the eating of material food. These details, which at the time carried conviction, are to us a cause of difficulty so great that most theologians slur them over. Some critics have accused me of unnecessarily dwelling upon them. I can only answer that I but follow the example of the Evangelists themselves, who repeatedly insist upon the corporeal nature of the appearances of their Lord. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me having."

When we come to St Paul, who is in point of time our earliest literary authority for the Resurrection, we find no doubt a somewhat changed point of view. He believed that Jesus had appeared to himself, but, as it would seem, in a less distinctly material form. This appearance is referred to in the Corinthian Epistles. In the book of *Acts* we have three accounts of it, all varying in important points,

but all agreeing that the appearance was not of a merely material character: to Paul, as to Stephen, Jesus appeared in exalted spiritual glory. To saints of the ancient and the mediæval Church such bodily visions of Jesus in glory were quite usual. One of the most recent, and by no means the least remarkable, of these visions is recorded in the life of the Scotch missionary, James Paton. He tells how, when in despair at the greatness of a task which lay before him, he saw a vision of the Lord which so encouraged him that he returned to his work with fresh courage and accomplished it with ease.

We may thus trace two successive stages in the appearance of the risen Lord to His disciples. First, there is the material or bodily appearance, the actual contact with which is said to have convinced the sceptical Thomas. Secondly, there is the appearance of a spiritualised body, such as that which St Paul saw on the way to Damascus, and Stephen saw standing on the right hand of God. And later

came not dissimilar visions, though naturally they seem to us less real, seen by devoted believers, and which have often been to them a source of energy and inspiration. I was about to write "seen by favoured believers"; but there came into my mind the noble saying of the Fourth Gospel, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The tales told in the Gospels of visions of the risen Christ, and the reports of those who have had such visions in more recent times, do not impress us with the same conviction with which they impressed our ancestors. We have learned from psychology and the history of religious movements that in certain conditions of health and of mind the inner sense, like a magic lantern, throws its impressions upon the world outside. It is not easy to see how we can attach evidential value to visions of Christ, and refuse it to visions of the Mother of Jesus and of the Saints which abound in the history of the Church, and

which it is not possible to brush aside as the results of mere superstition or imposture.

We have in fact, perhaps without fully realising it, completely changed our point of view as regards visions and communications from the unseen world. The question which perplexed men from the beginnings of Christianity to the time of Joan of Arc, and later, was whether they came from above or were a mere device of Satan. If they came from above, they carried their own credentials, and no one cared nicely to inquire exactly what they proved. If they were from below, they were merely misleading, successful plots by which the enemy of mankind brought men into his power. The question which perplexes us, more sceptical and rational than our ancestors, is whether such visions are really spiritual inspirations, or whether they may be accounted for by an abnormal state of health or an overexcited brain.

II

In modern days, speaking generally, it is not to visions that Christians trust as the source of their faith. It is rather to an inward spiritual experience. The facts of this experience are set forth in a very striking way in Dr Dale's remarkable work, *The Living Christ*, to which I would refer as proof that a life amid modern conditions, lived in close contact with all the new tendencies of the age, is not in the least incompatible with a close dependence upon the unseen Head of the Church.

The means by which ordinary Christians approach the Head of the Church are prayer and the Christian Communion. And in most cases the relations between the disciple and the Head are so closely bound up with facts of religious psychology as to be practically inseparable from them. The spiritual life of which repentance and faith are the most striking phenomena rests on a basis of experience

which is made up of the relations between the branches and the Vine, between the members and the Head. The testimony of the eyes and ears is no longer necessary to persuade the votary of the presence of his Master: he is convinced of it by a series of inner experiences which make up the history of his soul.

I will not speak any further of this Christian consciousness—of which, in fact, Christians do not like to say much. But the communion as described by Dr Dale is essentially a personal thing. It belongs to the individual. To the individual it carries a force of conviction which needs no confirmation, and is impatient of any doubts. But it is not the kind of mental experience which can be cited as evidence for any external fact. It cannot be brought before a sceptic or an inquirer as a proof of the objective source of the Christian inspiration. And from this point of view it would not be easy to distinguish it from a personal devotion to the Virgin Mother or

to any of the Saints, or indeed from the close communion with unseen powers which has marked in all ages the religions of mysticism. In all these cases alike we find a communion which satisfies the believer, and to which he clings with all the force of faith. This communion certainly has its roots in the unseen, but it would have to a sceptic no evidential value; and the world at large would judge it by the practical and ethical results which it brings forth in the life.

There is one way, and one way only, in which communications of this kind may be tested. This test is by their fruits; and it must be applied, not in a speculative, but in a practical way. It must be by the kind of judgment called by the Ritschlians value-judgments. An individual has a right to claim communion with a spiritual inspirer if the result of that inspiration is a nobler, more devoted life.

The world will and must judge of such spiritual experiences by the result. One can-

not well deny the spiritual inspiration of Joan of Arc, considering the work to which she was called. To Joan, doubtless, her visions of St Margaret and St Catharine were part of her spiritual experience, and any scepticism in regard to the reality of those visions would have been intolerable to her. But they could not be brought forward as a proof of the eternal glory of the two saints in question, of whom history knows but little. We may accept the reality of the communion of Joan with the unseen without being able to regard as objective the forms in which her imagination clothed that communion.

It is possible to formulate a satisfactory defence of the data of spiritual experience from the practical, if not from the speculative, point of view. A judgment in this realm may have value even if it be not speculatively provable. And the whole of our practical life in the world is full of such judgments, without which we could not pass a single day as ethical and responsible human beings. The philo-

sophic difficulties which thus arise are not speculatively solvable, but without their daily and hourly practical solution there would be no continuity in history.

Take, for example, the Christian consciousness of the best-known to us among the leaders of the early Church. Strictly speaking, we must allow that there was logically a break between the spiritual experience of St Paul and his view of the origin of his inspiration. But he was not, of course, at all aware of that break. And it was a break of the same kind as those which we find in our daily lives, and are accustomed to ignore. There is a logical break which is impassable between our perceptions and the external world of which they testify. There is a logical defect in our belief that the sun will rise to-morrow, or that iron when thrown into the water will sink. There is always, between perception and action, a logical fault, a gap which has to be filled up by an exercise of faith. St Paul made assumptions; but they were only such assump-

tions as every man has to make who lives a human life amid ordinary surroundings. The real question is whether his assumption was justified by the result. And here we have to appeal to the whole subsequent history of Christianity; and no Christian can for a moment misread it.

We have then to say, with St Paul, that the source of the Christian inspiration was the spirit of Christ working in the world to redeem and to purify it. How this could be we know not; for we know little as to the working of spirits apart from the body. Perhaps I should say we know little as yet. For there can scarcely be a question that more may be learned by careful inquiry. But at present we are at a transition point. We have given up the old views of verbal inspiration and communication by a voice from heaven, and have not yet succeeded in putting in their place more reasonable opinions. Therefore our language can be but vague. We can only say that the same spirit which,

being manifest in Jesus, set forth a new kind of faith and a new way of life, acted after the bodily removal from earth of the Master in the spiritual consciousness not only of those who had been His companions, but also of those who had not seen and yet had believed.

III

Looking at Christianity from without and not from within—not from the point of view of the Christian consciousness, but from that of observation and history—we see that the only satisfactory proof of connection between the Founder of Christianity and the Church must lie in an ethical and spiritual continuity between them.

The most solid proof that the Founder of Christianity is also the life and the sustainer of the Church is to be found in the continuity of life in the members of the Church itself. This is a proof which belongs to the community rather than to the individual.

This also belongs to the practical rather than to the speculative side of man. For, if we can suppose a person whose historic scepticism was complete, who had no "views" but went slavishly by document, there are scarcely any documents of early Christianity in which he might not pick holes. They have, indeed, all to be taken subject to reasonable historic criticism. It is the general result of them interpreted by a mind which is not a blank, but part of a character, which induces conviction. And the matter is, above all, one which is not for the mere individual investigator. If the early documents of the faith had been now first discovered in the sarcophagi of Egypt by modern investigators, the question of the relations of the Head to the Church would not have had any present or burning interest. Or, again, an individual has it in his power, if he pleases, to rest in the fact and reality of his spiritual experience, and not to trouble himself with history. But such limitation is an unwise, under existing con-

ditions almost a fatal, course. Every thoughtful Christian must needs take up the historic question with interest, and try to find by it a theoretic justification of the demands of the spirit.

And as a matter of fact every one of us belongs, to an extent that we seldom realise, to the community in which we live. "No man liveth to himself." We inherit all the results of the thought and the purposes of our ancestors, look at the world through their glasses, profit by their labours or expiate their faults. We cannot, if we would, start with mind and character like a blank book to be filled with the personal narrative of our own lives. Each of us belongs to a school, to a way of thought and action, often to a complicated way, produced by the interaction of many tendencies and habits. And each of us belongs to a family and a nation, whence we inherit not only intellectual tendencies, but profound moral bias, which if we could throw aside we should become colourless without

being impartial. It is, then, through a genial and sympathetic interpretation of Christian life in the past that we must approach the problem set before us.

It is, however, unnecessary to take a really agnostic line. Faith in Christ belongs to the practical, not to the speculative side of our nature, and it belongs to the community rather than to the individual. But though it would be difficult or impossible to establish it on merely psychologic or historic grounds, I should be far from saying that, when accepted, it cannot be justified in the courts of experience and of history. It goes beyond history, but it cannot be said to be in conflict with it. The further historic criticism is carried, the surer appears the residuum which it cannot destroy. Criticism of great poets like Shakespeare and Dante has been in our day carried to extremes, but the result is that those men of genius shine ever more brightly on the intellectual horizon. So a discerning criticism brings out with fresh force the inspiration of

the life and teaching of the Founder of Christianity. And the life and teaching of the Founder are seen to have a profound kinship with the tendencies and the ideas which made the fortune of rising Christianity. With changing circumstance these ideas change their aspect; but beneath the surface they still persist. It is still the doctrine of the Divine will and the spirit of Divine obedience which pass into the Church, not only from its present inspiring power, but also from its visible historic origin. Considering how little St Paul knew, or wished to know, in regard to the human life and teaching of his Master, it is marvellous how great is the essential similarity of their teaching. And that teaching is still the precious possession of the Churches of to-day.

IV

We cannot wonder that as the spiritual communion of the Church with Christ went

on, and the more notable saints had, like St Paul, visions and revelations of the Lord, while at the same time the Jesus of history faded more and more into the distance of the remote past—we cannot wonder, I say, that the current Christology took constantly a loftier and a more mystic tinge. As Harnack has observed, in the first centuries of Christianity every view which tended to exalt the person of the Master had on its side a devotion and a passionate love which secured it the victory. Some of the sects of the early Church seem almost to have ignored the fact that Christ had come in the flesh, and to have made Him only an aspect of the creating and all-present Divine Being. If the Monothelites and Monophysites had had their way, the human nature in Christ would have been quite lost sight of, or been recognised only by heretics. At a later time, when the iconoclastic controversy was raging, it seemed to the fervid destroyers of images almost a blasphemy to represent Christ by an image with the

semblance of a mere man. Yet upon the whole, by the Divine providence, the community did continue, often with a noble self-contradiction which was far better than a shallow consistency, to maintain at once the human and the Divine in Jesus Christ. The Gnostics were routed, the monophysites were defeated, the ideas of the iconoclasts were cast out. An appeal always lay to the historic Gospels; and the figure of the Master, however exalted and mystic, yet remained a human figure.

It may be feared that the great Reformers of the sixteenth century were in this matter less successful than the previous teachers of the Catholic Church. They pressed to an extreme such doctrines as that of St Paul, that Christ died for all men, and that of the Writer to the Hebrews, that Christ lives at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. And they were terribly determined in their efforts to construct on such bases logical systems of theology, using the wings of reason

in an air too thin to sustain them. Hence in some branches of the Reformed Church there has prevailed something approaching ditheism; a distinction somewhat like that of Marcion between a Creating and a Redeeming Deity being accepted. The impending wrath of the Father was supposed to be turned aside by the Son. Perhaps the services of the Church of England are not quite free from this taint; and certainly the services of some of the Dissenting bodies have not escaped it. But, on the other hand, as a corrective, the Gospels were introduced by the Reformers to the nations of Europe in their own languages; and as they became the daily study of all religious people, the teaching and the life of Jesus when on earth could not be lost sight of again.

We have to avoid two dangers. On one side is the danger of treating the Synoptic Gospels as what they certainly are not, sober and adequate history — a course which may well lead us to taking a merely humanistic

view of the Founder of Christianity. In taking this line we should not merely entirely fail to explain the existence of Christianity as a religion, but we should also be guilty of the materialism which is content with the outward shows of things instead of regarding life as a mere manifestation of idea and of spirit, and of the rationalism which places thought, reason, and speech above will, purpose, and character. If Jesus Christ be not in some sense divine, then we live in a universe which has nothing divine in it.

But we have also, even in this age, to beware of the opposite extreme. Those to whom the power of the spirit of Christ is a living reality are exceedingly apt to interpret in a non-natural way the human life of the Master, to make it an unreal show. Unless Jesus was a man with limited knowledge, with human attributes, passions, and temptations, his life can be to us no true model but only a mirage. If his birth was miraculous, and his course marked by a superhuman power over the

forces of nature, then the phrases of the Gospels become utterly untrue. "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also"; "Ye have continued with Me in My temptations"—phrases such as these can have no full meaning to those who merge the humanity of Jesus in His divine nature. Some of the most touching episodes in the life of the Master—such as the Temptation, the scene in the garden of Gethsemane, even the death on the cross—lose all force and meaning if we deny the true and natural humanity of the sufferer. We cannot give up either picture of the diptych, and must find some way of uniting them into a higher unity.

VIII

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

I MUST first explain in what sense I would interpret the phrase "The Church" or "The Catholic Church." The Church cannot be bounded by the limits of any particular ecclesiastical organisation, whatever may have been the importance of that organisation in past history. Nor can the term be taken vaguely to include all who would call themselves by the Christian name. It does not consist of those who hold any particular set of theological views. The Church is the body which continues upon earth the obedience of Jesus Christ, the society or societies which exist for the purpose of doing the will of God, and bringing down his kingdom from heaven

to earth. A church there may be of Buddhism, and a church of Islam: the Christian Church stands apart from these as different alike in the ideals which it sets before itself and in historic origin and development. The three great divisions of the Christian Church —the Roman Church, the Eastern Churches, and the Reformed Churches of the West— embody various renderings of the search for the Kingdom, and are suited to different races of men. The life of the Master and the theology of the New Testament are the roots whence all alike grow; but the branches have turned to different points of the compass, and been affected by various conditions.

I

Religion is based upon spiritual experience. And the necessity for a church is based upon a remarkable fact in spiritual experience. This belongs as a potentiality to perhaps a large part of mankind; but as an actuality to but

few. It is worth while to observe, not perhaps as an explanation of this fact, but as a parallel to it, that the peculiar nervous organisation which lends itself to the production of the phenomena of spiritism also belongs only to a certain number of people. As some people are better able than others to subordinate the conscious to the subconscious element in their nature, so some people, not by any means necessarily the same, are better fitted to be the vehicle of a higher inspiration.

Thus the great difference in efficacy between the appeal to observation in matters of physical science and the appeal to experience in religion is that, whereas all men who possess the ordinary senses are able to observe the facts of the visible world, the capacity of spiritual observation belongs to us in very various degrees. In the case of some men, born to exceptional privilege, their whole life is a wonderful history of intercourse with spiritual realities. In the

case of others, who may be worthy men and excellent citizens, intercourse with the unseen may seem, not merely inaccessible to themselves, but so mingled with fancy and subjectivity as to be thoroughly untrustworthy, a realm of snares and pitfalls. Such natures will demand a positive religion, based on a definite supernatural revelation, and strongly organised in the world in the form of a church.

One result of this inequality in inspiration is that certain books resulting from a special insight into divine things are set apart, by the general feeling of mankind, as sacred and authoritative. The mass of people, who see things broadly and roughly, will be apt to set them down as infallible, meaning thereby that they are to be set above criticism, and regarded as finally authoritative.

Another result is the organisation of societies the great business of which is to hold as in a reservoir the results of inspiration,

and to weld out of them a system of doctrine and of cultus.

It results from the very nature of the human mind that all revelation must originally be revelation to an individual. It has very close relations to the will and the personality of him who is its recipient. But revelation in a church loses this personal aspect, and becomes adapted to the community. Here again an analogy, for it is only an analogy, from the facts of spiritism is very suggestive. It is observed that the communications from some subconscious source which come by writing or otherwise to spiritist circles depend for their character in some degree upon all those present; and the taking away from, or addition to, the circle of members will alter the character of the communication. The presence of a thoroughly unsympathetic or hostile nature may stop the flow of communication altogether. Hence it would seem that when a number of people are met together for a common purpose something is present

besides the sum of their individualities, some general character or consciousness. How this can be we know not: these phenomena have not yet been sufficiently studied. In the same way, as every orator is aware, the sympathy of an interested audience will greatly help and stimulate him, and perhaps furnish him with fresh ideas on the subject on which he is speaking. It is known that there have been remarkable instances of collective hallucination, when the presence of a strong common belief has even so far dominated the senses of all present as to transform what was properly only subjective into objects accessible to the external senses.

Every fact is sacred, and every fact may have inferences of unlimited extent. These facts of psychology may help us to understand how there has always been in the assemblies of the Christian Church an inspiration different from the inspiration of individuals—the sum of individual inspirations, yet with something added. The general tendency of

such common impulse, whatever its ultimate source, would no doubt be influenced by that of the most powerful spiritual natures present; but it would be at once rendered more intense and shorn of personal aberrations by the common feeling.

What applies to the ordinary Christian assembly would also apply to those concentrated assemblies called Councils of the Church. If the spirit of the Founder remained in the Church to guide and to animate it, it would be present especially in these unions of the most remarkable leaders of religion. Their decisions, especially those of the earlier Councils, must be regarded with the greatest respect. But to say this is very far from saying that they were infallible. And we may easily discern two circumstances which must make us very unwilling to ascribe to them infallibility.

In the first place, as the Church became less spiritual and lived on closer terms with the world, those who composed the Councils

ceased to be necessarily her most highly inspired and gifted members. And the Roman Emperors took to interfering on political grounds with the liberty of decision. Earthly considerations became of greater and greater account; and if the Councils seem on the whole to have taken a good line, this often arose from the predominant influence of a man or men who spoke with an irresistible authority, and compelled the rest to give way. In the circumstances of the time, probably the only alternative to anarchy and the infinite division of Christianity lay in accepting the rule of Bishops and the doctrinal decisions of Councils.

In the second place, of whatever nature the inspiration of Councils might be, it certainly did not give them supernatural wisdom in matters of science and philosophy. Their chief work was the formulation of doctrine; and in this matter the head was involved as well as conscience and heart. If their formulæ usually embodied the best way of deciding

the doctrinal questions before them with a view to the interests of the Church and her continued life, they had to be set forth in terms of the current philosophy; and that philosophy being by no means eternal, but very apt to pass out of date, there was in their decrees an element of weakness and decay which is already sufficiently evident, and which will probably become more evident as days go on, and the great changes introduced during the last century in our ways of regarding nature and man proceed to their inevitable consequences.

However, looking at the subject in a purely historic light, and setting aside a too modern point of view, we may see how the early organisation of the Church enabled her to be the vehicle of the Christian spirit, and to resist some at least of the hostile forces which threatened her destruction. And we learn the lesson that there is in all ages need for constant expression of the inspiration of the Church, or of various branches of the Church,

to counteract the eccentricities of individual feeling, and to indicate a path of general progress.

II

To the individual, the family, the nation, there come divine ideas, revelations of some phase or part of the purposes of God in the world. The Christian Church is the great reservoir into which all the streams from the hills of spiritual experience flow. She treasures up all the revelations which have in successive ages been given to those who were her sons, and strives to express in the language of human wisdom the lessons which they have taught in regard to the nature of God and the duty of man. And the Church is the constant guardian of the relations which exist between man as a spiritual being and the God who governs man and has redeemed him. It is her business to strive that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and that there may appear in the world some

dim reflection of that divine kingdom which exists for ever in the presence of God.

The Church is the continuation upon earth of the life of Jesus Christ, and the expression of the relations between the human and the Divine will. The test of all life is the energy with which it works upon its surroundings. So the Church's life is proved by the way in which it adapts to itself new surroundings, and absorbs into itself nutriment from all forms of energy and thought with which it comes in contact. But the corollary is evident. In various ages and in different countries the Church must take very different forms. Its mode of government and organisation, in particular, is a mere matter of expediency or necessity. It is of course most desirable that in a high sense there should be unity in the Church, that the tradition of a common origin, the relation to a common Master, the acceptance of sacred books, should hold the Church together in the face of other religious or temporal powers. At some periods, under the

later Roman Empire and in mediæval Europe, far more than this was necessary—an external unity of control and discipline, without which the civilised world would have fallen into a chaos of warring nationalities. And in the Middle Ages Christianity could only exercise its spiritual function of holding the peoples together and maintaining the unity of civilisation by appropriating and continuing the tradition of the Roman dominion.

The primacy of Rome and the maintenance of the machinery of government in the Church under Roman control had a complete historic justification. But we must distinguish between historic justification and present need. It is difficult to see what high religious end would be gained if it were possible to reintroduce into Western Europe some outward unity of control. It would not really draw the nations into amity. The Austrians and Hungarians, or the Spanish and Italians, are scarcely made more friendly one to the other as nations because they alike regard the Pope as the head

of their religion. But on the other side, if we could for a moment regard as possible the formation of a fresh religious unity between the Teutonic and the Latin races, it would be the most deplorable of events. The strong organisation and complete centralisation of the Roman Church must make it the dominant factor in any fresh union; nor could Rome agree to union on any other terms. And obviously this would mean the surrender of religious liberty and spiritual ideals in the north and west of Europe. Fortunately this notion of reunion is but a nightmare. It is impossible in this age to subject the spirit of England, Sweden, and Germany to the Roman domination, unless one first destroyed the religious life of those countries. At the same time one must confess that the Reformed Churches are passing through a period of great peril, and that considerable gains by the Church of Rome at their expense are by no means unlikely in the near future. The sudden changes in our moral and intellectual

horizon make timid people disposed to fly for refuge to that branch of the Church which seems to change the least. Only when the Reformed Churches have learned more fully to adapt themselves to the ideas of a new age will they recover their influence among free peoples.

I have spoken of the Church of Rome as impervious to change. And that is, broadly speaking, the aspect in which she appears to most people in our day. Yet the Roman Church tries hard to adapt her ways to such of the tendencies of the age as she does not regard as essentially at variance with her fixed principles. And if we look back for several centuries we shall see that this self-adaptability was formerly greater. M. Loisy has put it forth as the great merit of the Church which has its centre in Rome that it has in all ages been adapting itself to changing ways of thought and organisation in the world which lies around it. Certainly the Roman Church has shown great vitality, and with that vitality

great power of self-adaptation. More particularly, in the age which followed the Reformation, she departed from her previous ways, adapting herself, not to the new spirit of Europe, but to the spirit of the Latin races of Europe. But on the other hand, if we regard the past, we cannot acquit the Roman organisation of the charge of often adapting itself to what was unworthy of approval, and what by a more determined attitude the Church might have done much to destroy. Materialist views of spiritual communion, the veneration of relics, the sale of indulgences, and many other unworthy ways of thought and action have been from time to time taken under the protection of Rome. And besides, for many centuries past, the temporal possessions of the Papacy have been a continual source of base and unworthy concessions to worldly forces. The revolt of the Teutonic spirit against Roman domination was inevitable and final. And at the present day, though the Roman Church has made terms with some of the

forces of the new age, she has failed to reconcile to herself many others. With historic science she has a fresh and a bitter quarrel. With the turn which speculative thought has taken since the days of Descartes she cannot reconcile herself.[1] Deliberately she has harked back to the Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas as a satisfactory philosophy for the present age. Her defenders boast[2] that the Church is not more hostile to the modern spirit than was the primitive body of Christians to the ideas incorporated in the Roman Empire, and that in the ancient clashing the Church came out victorious. This is an odd travesty of the truth. Will, then, the victory of the Roman Church lead us to a fresh eclipse of civilisation? The outlook is scarcely enticing. The spirit of nationality in France, in Austria, in America, and above all in Italy is growing

[1] So writes Dr Ehrhard in his defence of Catholicism: "Attempts hitherto made to incorporate in Catholic theology the true results of modern thought have hitherto nearly all missed their mark."—*Der Catholizismus*, p. 257.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

increasingly hostile to Rome. Between her and the best tendencies of modern education there are continual clashings. How much might be done by a reforming Pope to adapt the organisation and the teaching of the Roman Church to modern conditions is a most interesting question. But the experiment is scarcely one which we are likely to witness. Practically, one may say that the old flag of Romanism is nailed to the mast, and that the vessel to which it belongs will either survive almost in its present guise, or else bodily disappear amid the waters. I have, however, sufficiently spoken elsewhere of the application to the Roman Church of the doctrine of development, and I have no wish to be again drawn into the barren regions of controversy.

III

For us the condition and the future of the Reformed Churches is a question of closer interest and of greater practical importance

than any speculations as to possible developments in the Church of Rome. And truly we have dangers and difficulties of our own quite sufficiently severe and imminent to claim all our attention. These difficulties belong partly to the general position of the Reformed Churches; partly they are peculiar to the Anglican Church, as a compensation for her many and notable advantages.

At the root of all the reformed religion lies the belief, the one great indispensable datum of religion, that to every human soul, apart from all organisation, all race, all variety of opinion, there lies open a door of access to the spiritual world and its Divine Ruler. It holds that man can, if he will, hear in his own heart the voice of God, and receive into his own breast the stream of righteousness, of strength, of wisdom, flowing from an exhaustless spiritual source. The reformed faith has restored to men the spiritual privilege of which the Roman hierarchy had tried to deprive them, that each should stand as a

priest in the presence of his Maker, and offer to Him the sacrifice of the will and the heart. But at the time of the Reformation it was necessary to set up in opposition to the authority of Rome some other authority which the Christian world could recognise as its equal or superior. Naturally such authority could not be found in the conscience of the individual. The one harbour of refuge was inevitably to be found in the sacred literature of the Bible. Before the rise of serious historic and literary criticism, it was possible thus to take the Bible as a single whole, and to produce out of it systems of belief from which could be wrought the confessions of churches and the creeds of great divines. The infallibility or quasi-infallibility of the Bible was the basis on which were erected the reformed confessions of faith and the reformed systems of church organisation.

A reform thus carried out could not possibly have permanent efficacy. With the coming in of scientific Biblical criticism its very

foundations were undermined. The Reformers had accepted the doctrines of the Roman Church except in those particular matters out of which their revolt had arisen. They did not dream of revising the theology of Paul, nor did they see that the Fourth Gospel stood on an altogether different plane as a historic document from the other three. They adopted the old creeds of Christianity, and they were almost more hostile to the great revelation of Greece, to art and poetry and the drama, than was the purged Roman Church itself. Their religion was not positive but Protestant, a revolt against intolerable abuses rather than a new and broader view of the relation between man and God.

It surely is time that the Reformed Churches dropped the appellation *Protestant*. When the Reformation was struggling for its life against the vast political power of Rome, and everyone who left the old Church did so at the risk of exile or death, it was noble to be Protestant. But at present the Church of

Rome has no longer the power to persecute. There is now no reason why we should protest against the conscientious beliefs of the Romans, any more than against those of the Presbyterians or the Lutherans. It is true that it is very difficult to find another term which will include all the non-Roman churches of the West. The term "Reformed" has unfortunately been appropriated by the Calvinists. And a man can scarcely call himself "a Reformed," or it might be fancied that he had once been a drunkard.

The difficulty in finding an appropriate designation is here, as it often is, a sign that the logical and philosophical problem has not been thought out. The various sections of the Reformed Church even appeal to radically different sources of authority. The Anglicans stand by the Bible and the Prayer Book, some of the Nonconformist bodies by the Bible alone, the Wesleyans by the writings of their founder, the Quakers by the inner light. In future the appeal is likely to lie more and

more in the direction of reverence for fact, whether fact of psychology or of history. If it is true that to every man the way lies open by which he may draw near to God, if it is true that God forgives sins and bestows grace, then we may hope by observing the natural history of the facts of the religious life to obtain for the Church or the Churches an incontrovertible appeal, and an endless source of spiritual enlightenment.

This is the firm and lasting foundation of religion. But the foundation, however necessary to a building, is not its most conspicuous part. And it is clearly shown by the history of Christianity that on the most solid foundations buildings of a most fantastic character may be reared. In England and America especially the excess of individualism has constantly led to the formation of sects or groups, which have been liable to extraordinary aberrations both in belief and conduct. The conscience of an individual, however sensitive and highly trained, or of a group dominated

by an individual, is not to be trusted. We must remember that each individual is a point in two vast series. As a point is related to a superficies, so the individual is related to the church to which he belongs and of which he is a part. As a point is related to an infinite line, so an individual is related to his race, to his ancestors stretching back far out of sight, of whose life his own is a continuation and a corollary. Thus the Bible does not reach us as a mere book to be read and criticised, but a mass of literature which has been worked through ages into the fibre of our moral life. And our Church is not to us a mere sum of units, but a great whole in regard to which we have duties, and which has an ancestral claim on our respect and obedience.

That religious body must in the long run prove most effective which knows best how to use fully, and to organise, the spiritual experience of its members, while at the same time keeping spiritual aberration within bounds by maintaining a lofty standard of appeal,

based upon the writings of the great spiritual leaders of mankind in the past. I am, of course, speaking of the intellectual aspect of the matter. But really it is at bottom a question not of knowledge but of faith, of loyalty to the spiritual Head of the religion, of ready self-surrender to divine impulses. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. He who will do the will of the Father in Heaven shall know the doctrine whether it be of God. The Church which by faith and by charity most clearly lives in the spirit of Christ is sure best to carry on in the world the Christian life which never ceases.

IV

I have said that the Anglican Church has great troubles and difficulties of her own. To me these are so evident that I fear lest in glancing at them I may leave the impression of pessimism and despair. Our Church has the enormous advantage that in an age of

transition, when principles are in a state of flux, it provides a working scheme for preserving order and allowing the new leaven to work beneath the surface. It has a tradition of liberality and comprehension; men of the most different views have been allowed a place in the ministry, and the cleavage between clergy and laity has not in the past been so deep in the Anglican communion as in any of the other great churches of Christendom. At the present time these are great advantages, but it must be confessed that there go with them deplorable disadvantages.

If the Anglican Church is liberal and comprehensive, this fact is in a great measure due to her want of keen vitality. Any movement which arouses her from lethargy is sure to diminish the breadth of her toleration. Perhaps there is no church in Christendom which feels the dead hand more heavy than does the Anglican. Her formularies were drawn up at the time of the Reformation. They were written in a spirit of compromise,

and therefore do not show a logical plan. They were written in an uncritical age, and the growth of historic science bears upon them with extreme severity. In the daily services the whole of the Psalms is sung and nearly the whole of the Bible publicly read; though almost every modern congregation feels the unsuitability of much of what is thus brought before them. The Anglican prayers, if on the whole beautiful, are monotonous; and the most sacred service, that of the Communion, is injured by the introduction of such inappropriate matter as the Jewish ten commandments, which obviously belong to a far lower level of morality than that of the Christian Church. Our liturgy sadly wants revision, enlargement, variety. And the confessions of faith signed by the clergy and repeated by the laity contain so many theses which are utterly out of date that there is a tendency to regard their repetition or acceptance as a mere matter of form.

In fact, the Church is bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, fettered by the historic views of the primitive society, the philosophy of the Middle Ages, the superseded theological views of the great Reformers. She has infinite need of great leaders to adapt her to a new time. And yet at present one scarcely sees the possibility of reform. The dominant party in the Church, if it had a free hand, would use it, not to make alterations in the direction of progress, but to bring back many of the ways and the thoughts of the Dark Ages. Even so slight a change as to make optional the repeating of the Athanasian Creed, which is a real burden on the conscience of a great part of the clergy and the mass of the intelligent laity, is strenuously resisted. At present one can see nothing to be done but to strive earnestly to preserve freedom, and to wait and hope for the growth of a new spirit.

Yet, great as are the difficulties which beset the Anglican Church, they are not greater than those which lie before other branches of

the Christian tree. In the next pages I hope to approach them in a less critical and more hopeful spirit, and to attempt a more complete discussion of the position of liberal Anglicans, so as to discern how the head of the ship should be set to pass out of the storm into a serener sphere.

IX

LIBERAL ANGLICANISM

In the present discourse I wish to take up a question which has limits. I propose to speak not merely as a Christian, nor even as a Christian of the Reformed Faith, but as an Anglican. Every man must belong to some particular branch of the Church of Christ; and to me, after looking about me on all sides, it seems that the Anglican Church, in spite of all its difficulties and dangers, to which I am in no way blind, is yet the branch of the Universal Church to which I am prepared to adhere with filial loyalty.

It is unnecessary to maintain a narrow adherence to any particular branch of the Church Universal. All branches have their

special excellences and their special suitability to particular natures or particular surroundings. To my thinking the *via media* of the Anglican Church, avoiding alike the materialism and bigotry of Rome and the too great subjectivity of the Protestant Dissenters, seems the best way. And I adhere to it with the same loyalty with which I adhere to my country or my family, though neither of these is above criticism. I wish to consider what kind of liberalism is best suited to those who are loyal members of the Anglican Church, and especially those who are lay members of it. I shall not attempt to be severely practical, but rather to consider the matter in the light of broad principles of belief and of conduct.

The liberal Christian who is an Anglican will naturally differ on some points from other liberal Christians. This is a truism. But in the *Hibbert Journal*[1] a prominent Roman Catholic writer has expressed himself as

[1] Vol. iii. p. 376. The writer signs *Romanus*.

follows:—"Science is science, not apologetic; applied to the critical movement in theology the antithesis of Catholic and Protestant is out of place." Of course the main principles of historic and psychologic criticism are the same for all of us. But in their application we find great differences. The Roman, the Anglican, the Presbyterian, if equally determined and thorough in their acceptance of those principles, will reach very different views as to Church government and doctrine. What, then, is the particular complexion of liberalism which is best suited to the Anglican Church? What is her special task in relation to the great intellectual movement which, in one form or another, influences all educated Christians?

I cannot, of course, in a brief paper like the present, analyse the character and position of the Anglican Church. But I may be allowed to take up certain salient features which mark her. In the first place, she cherishes an ancient freedom. In the second place, she is

national. In the third place, she lies close to the main facts of the spiritual life. In the fourth place, she joins on to the main stem of the historic Church of Christ. I propose to say a few words as to her in each of these aspects. And I shall endeavour to show that in each aspect there is need, and there is scope, for the working of a liberal spirit, a spirit alive to what is best in the modern world, but not accepting what is worse, a spirit of progressive idealism.

I

I know, on the very best authority, that there is nothing which many ministers of some of the Nonconformist bodies admire more in our Church than the liberty of clergy and people. No doubt for this liberty we have to pay a price, in which price the most notable feature is a good deal of compromise, and a want of logical roundness. Our Church is at once Catholic and Reformed. She is Episcopal, yet she allows her bishops to be

nominated by the State, and gives them very little authority over the clergy. She adheres to a Prayer Book drawn up amid all the theological currents and counter-currents of the times of the Reformation, and often placing side by side irreconcilable views. If her formularies were strictly interpreted and rigidly enforced, she would be among the narrowest and most heavily fettered churches in Christendom, bound hand and foot in the grave-clothes of the sixteenth century, utterly unable to respond to any fresh call of circumstance, and unfit to move with any new breath of inspiration.

But fortunately she redeems her original inconsistencies by remaining persistently illogical. On the whole, the secular courts have greatly tended to preserve liberty. So long as the machine has worked, the governing body of the nation has cared but little about intellectual difficulties. Subscription has become a general, not a detailed, expression of consent to the Prayer Book. A clergyman

who is useful, and has tact, may venture on much freedom of Christian opinion.

Of course this want of consensus has its drawbacks. If the Church were animated by a great religious revival, it would be a sad impediment. Yet I think that there are reasons why, at the present time, it is very advantageous.

Auguste Comte, who, in spite of his limitations, was yet one of the greatest thinkers of the last century, laid down that in a time of intellectual transformation what was most imperatively needed was a visible authority which would preserve order, but interfere as little as possible with the working of society. Thus the practical freedom of the Anglican Church is, from the liberal point of view, of inestimable value. One of the most pressing duties of liberal Churchmen is to discourage and to oppose in every way the tendency which seems to be growing among some of our bishops to fancy that it is their right or their duty more fully to regulate the beliefs

of the clergy in their dioceses. Personally, no doubt, the bishops who thus act are among the most conscientious and high-minded men in the Episcopal body. But the notion that in our days of rapid intellectual change and development an individual can be justified in setting up his own opinions as a standard of religious orthodoxy in a diocese is incongruous and even ludicrous. In the Church of Rome, of course, it is quite another matter. That Church speaks with one voice, and one only. But in England it is the ultimate appeal to secular courts which saves the Anglican Church from narrowness. If there is to be any other standard of orthodoxy than that which they maintain, it must be settled by some body which represents the best and most enlightened view of Anglicanism as a whole, lay as well as clerical. An orthodoxy which is confined to this or that district, and does not pass in the next diocese, is an absurdity. There can be no more obvious duty for a

liberal Churchman than to uphold liberty in the Church.

However, it may safely be assumed that on the whole the freedom of belief in the Anglican Church will vindicate itself, that the English people will not tolerate the introduction of new religious tests specially designed to exclude or eject from the Church men of broader views. And the next question is, What kind of liberalism in belief may be expected to grow, behind the shield of a secular protection, among those Anglicans who adhere to the Christian Church, and especially that pure and reformed branch of it established in this country.

The first thing to be hoped is that it will not deal with mere negations. It has always been the danger of reformers that they begin by protesting against what they see to be wrong in existing institutions, and when they are opposed their protest grows louder and more bitter, until they forget that even an abuse can only be removed if one finds a better

way of doing the thing which must be done in one way or another. Reformers are apt rather to raise a storm in order to tear away the fading leaves from the trees, than to imitate Nature, which pushes off the old leaf by the action of the bud which contains the leaves of next year. On the Continent of Europe the preponderance of the Roman Church is so great that its opponents have commonly been driven into a "Protestant" position, a position of hostility rather than of search for a better way. And thus they have condemned or set aside a vast deal which is really in accordance with deep facts of human nature, and of which only the traditional outward form is inadmissible.

In England and America there is little real need or justification for a merely destructive attitude. Ultramontanism is likely never to regain a predominant position among us. And the Romanising tendency in the Church of England is not likely to become a serious danger. In the past it has done good as well

as harm, but it is an exotic which cannot flourish in the soil of Anglicanism, and the number of laymen who seriously accept it as the way of salvation is very small. We have therefore little excuse for confining ourselves to protests and objections, and are the more bound to move forward with resolute hopefulness. To secure liberty is a necessity; but liberty does not vindicate itself unless it is used to good purpose.

II

On those who belong to the particular branch of the Church called Anglican there is laid a national duty. For the Anglican Church is bound, by the very facts of its history and constitution, to claim to represent the English people as a religious and spiritual personality. All the people she of course does not represent: Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents alike contribute valuable elements to the general life. But the first duty

of a national church is to be national, to respond to the needs and requirements of the people in the way best suited to the national character. Wherein Englishmen differ from Italians and Spaniards the English Church may be expected to differ from the Church originally organised in Italy, and largely re-shaped in Spain in the sixteenth century.

It is a strange thing that, although the English have behind them in the past a history more manly and effective than that of any other country, and have at present a position and destiny in the world full of dignity and of duty, yet we are very backward to express, even in our own hearts, our national faith and hope. The revival of nationality has been one of the greatest movements of our time. In many countries of Europe, especially in those belonging to the Eastern Church, nationality is so bound up with religion that the two can scarcely be separated. Again, in some of the countries of South Europe, such as Italy, the growing spirit of nationality has largely taken

the place of decaying religious belief. This would seem to be the case also in distant Japan. In our own islands there has arisen an intense spirit of nationality, allied with religion —in Wales and Ireland. England is perhaps of all great countries the least openly national. The reason of this, no doubt, lies in our history. It has fallen to us to control and to weld together many races and countries, in regard to which we have had to take up an attitude of judicial impartiality. To intrude upon them the fact that we are of another nationality would be to arouse difficulties for ourselves. Yet, if Continental writers are to be believed, the nationality of Englishmen, though not openly displayed, is very deep seated. There is room among us, in addition to the imperial tendency, for a keener realisation of the moral and spiritual personality of the English race.

Among the various aspects which Christianity has presented in recent times among the nations of Europe, the Christianity of England has shown a clearly marked type.

We have not rivalled the Germans in the speculations of religious philosophy nor in the gentle mysticism conspicuous in the Moravian community. We have not been as logical in developing doctrine, whether Roman or Reformed, as the French, with whom arose the systems of Aquinas, of Abélard, and of Calvin. Still less have we approached the asceticism and fervent religiosity of the Spanish. We have been conspicuous for not tending to extremes, for reverencing fact and reality, for being anxious to judge religious developments by the test of fruits rather than by any speculative criticism. Bishop Ken, Bishop Wilson, Dean Stanley, Charles Kingsley, such are the men who may fairly be taken as representing the spirit of the English Church. And what they really exhibit is merely the national temperament in the sphere of religion. It is a thing which rationalism and logic are too apt to overlook, that the temper of a nation is its most fundamental and abiding characteristic, and that only when adapted to that temper

can any form of social organisation, of political institution, of religious reform, take root and flourish. The nation is what it is, and no amount of intellectual urging will make it different: the great object of the reformer must be so to adapt his reforms to the deep, unconscious strata of the life of the nation that they may thence draw a constant flow of energy.

The Christian Church is the manifestation of a continuous life; the Creeds are but attempts to express that life in the terms of philosophy and history. So also the Anglican Church is the manifestation of the religious life of the English people. The organisers of the English Church did not understand this, and tried to mark out the path of religious thought as well as of religious action and organisation for future ages. Instead of trying to modify the lines thus drawn, the English people has been content to leave them alone, stepping outside them to the right and to the left on occasion, while ac-

knowledging that in general their guidance is useful and beneficent. From most points of view, except those of reason and consistency, this is no such bad plan.

Thus we have not much to fear, in England, in the long run, from either Roman propaganda or organised socialistic negation. Extremes, whether in speculation or practice, soon cause a reaction. What we have rather to oppose is the defects of our national qualities, which at various periods of our history have dragged us from a higher to a lower level. I mean such qualities as inertness, want of faith, love of material ease, indifference to the higher life. These appear to be the failings which naturally go with the better qualities of the race, and to contend against these is to work with and not against the grain of the national life. The great leaders are those who have been able to persuade the people to rise in their own way somewhat above their natural level, who have made the most of what is generous and manly in the national tempera-

ment, and put to shame for the time the slowness of blood and the materialism which have opposed the working of noble ideas.

Few liberal Churchmen will doubt that there is an enormous field open to the Church, if she really sets herself to the task of deepening and raising the national life. They are much more likely to be depressed by the fear that the task has become too great to attempt hopefully.

III

There were in the Anglican Church two great movements in the last century: the Evangelical Movement, and the Oxford Movement of half a century ago which followed it. Both of these have been productive of great good; but both have fallen short of the highest level, partly through a want of broader and more liberal elements.

The great merit of the Evangelical Movement was that it brought forward and laid great stress upon those primary relations

between the human spirit and its Lord which are the ultimate basis of all religious belief. Such tenets as that there is a way of approach to God open to all human souls; that every man stands in need of Divine forgiveness, yet can only seek it through a gift of Divine grace; that every man must be born again before he can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven —all these are among the elementary facts of Christian psychology. And the belief that the world of nature and the world of human beings are not only under the sway of Divine law, but also serve to work out the Divine ideas, is also essential to a religious view of the visible universe. The primary facts of the religious experience of individuals, apart from theories about those facts, and hope and faith in regard to the destiny of souls and the history of the world, belong to all Christians and to many who do not claim the name. Here liberalism consists mainly in reinterpretation, in giving to the same facts of experience a modern garb of theory.

And it was here, I think, that the Evangelicals fell short. They were quite right in their main teachings, but it is a pity that they closely bound up those teachings with views as to inspiration, as to the infallibility of the Bible, as to the doctrine of salvation, which were out of date and out of harmony with our surroundings. The result has been that modern Evangelicalism has the air of a thing that fears the light of day, and is hostile to Biblical criticism and scientific history. Yet the great intellectual discoveries of our day are not hostile to, but entirely on the side of, religion. The progress of physical science seems to be cutting away the basis of materialism as a philosophic doctrine; and the great movements in psychology, especially as embodied in the works of Professor William James, show the phenomena of the spiritual life to be on the same plane of reality, to be as fully guaranteed by experience, as any other phenomena of the mind. They are no more morbid than are the phenomena of genius, or

the sexual emotions which spring up in man and woman as they reach maturity.

The liberty which exists in the Anglican Church, the establishment in it of certain barriers within which we may freely move, gives us especial opportunities for the reinterpretation of spiritual experience. The Roman Church has, through long ages, closely bound herself with creed and formula. How much may be done by a progressive clergyman of the English Church in the way of renovating doctrine and making it actual, is shown by the career and the writings of F. W. Robertson. Robertson did not found a school; but it may be doubted if any religious works of our time have had more influence with the intelligent laity than his sermons. And the preacher had, even in his lifetime, a considerable and devoted band of admirers.

I shall not dwell longer on the need of reinterpretation of fact and restatement of doctrine in modern Christianity, partly

because it is a need which is pressing in all branches of the Church, and my present theme is especially the needs and duties of the Anglican community in particular. I pass on, therefore, to speak of the second of the great religious movements of the last century —that which originated in Oxford in the early Victorian age, and which was more distinctly Anglican and ecclesiastical than the Evangelical Movement.

IV

While all thoughtful Christians alike must perceive that, without acceptance of the facts of the spiritual life, all religion is dead; to those Christians who are primarily Churchmen these facts will be almost like the foundation of a house, indispensable, but out of sight, while their minds dwell continually on the historic superstructure of the Christian Church, that vast and visible organisation, stretching back through the ages to the Founder. They will believe not only in a Divine working in

the world and in human hearts, but also in a collective revelation. They will dwell on the constant presence of the spirit of Christ in the Church. It is here that we find what may be called the watershed between those who are Churchmen and those who are not: I mean the intellectual difference. Those who regard the history of Christianity between the time of the Apostles and that of the Reformers as nothing but a melancholy process of corruption and decay, who think that there soon came a break between the spirit of the Founder and His Church, and that the source of its inspiration was dried up, may be Christians in a full sense, and have unwavering faith in the Founder of their religion, but it is hard to see how they can be properly called Churchmen. One need not, of course, in accepting the continuity of the life of the Church look upon her as infallible, or as always living up to the height of her vocation. She has always been prone to backsliding, and in some ages has almost ceased to shine as a light to the world.

But there has been a continuity of existence, and spirit has handed on to spirit the life of the Founder.

As it is the great merit of the Evangelical leaders that they laid fresh stress on the facts of Christian psychology, so it is the great merit of the leaders of the Tractarian movement that they emphasised anew what had been almost forgotten, the continuity of the Christian life and the permanent inspiration of the Christian Church. But here again, as I venture to think, a great movement has been hampered by narrowness and want of culture, and is in danger of finding itself in opposition to all that is progressive in the modern intellectual life.

Few opinions are more general among reflecting Anglicans than regret at the limitations, if they may so be termed, of the Reformers of the sixteenth century. The course they took was perhaps at the time inevitable, but it has since had its revenges. In rejecting what was intolerable in the

doctrine and discipline of the Roman Church, they also in many cases threw away what was of inestimable value. Like hasty weeders they pulled up the wheat with the tares. And because much which they rejected had deep roots in the spiritual nature of man, the Roman Church has by degrees regained much of the ground she had lost. By rejecting all belief and all custom for which they could not find Scriptural justification, the Reformers made war upon the doctrine of development, which holds of religious as of secular history. Fortunately they read into Scripture much which, properly speaking, is not there, or they would have gone still further in the direction of negation. As it was, they made their churches poor and cold by excluding from them many of the developments which the Church had evolved to meet the demands of the Christian heart. It is impossible to many intensely to believe in the future life and at the same time to reject all attempt at spiritual communion with the departed. Human

nature cannot now tolerate the belief in the division of mankind at death into the children of light and the children of darkness, but often insists upon some intermediate or probationary state. To some Christians in every land the ascetic life, the life of poverty and chastity, will appear the only means of saving their souls. And however great be the dangers of the confessional, and however binding the duty of keeping it within bounds, it is certain that to some weaker souls it is a priceless boon. Its consonance to human nature is best shown by the fact that John Wesley introduced it in a democratic form, by his institution of the class-meeting, into his society. And although ritual and religious pomp involve dangers, yet their complete absence must tend, save in a time of great religious fervour, to make our churches cold and unattractive through neglect of the æsthetic side of man.

There was indeed a real need for the Catholic revival of the middle of the last

century. It has done much to quicken the pulses of the Anglican Church, and especially of the clergy. It has produced a more historic bent in the Church, and raised barriers against the secular spirit, which threatened to destroy religious life altogether. But on two sides it started at some disadvantage. In the first place, it did not start as a broad popular movement, but among a group of gifted Oxford dons, and it is only here and there that it has really taken hold of the popular life and imagination. And in the second place, its founders were unfortunately out of touch with modern thought, both historic and scientific. It has been said that the movement would not have taken place if Newman had known German. I should prefer to say that it would have taken a different course if Newman and his party had been fairly launched on the stream of European thought. One cannot help for a moment trying to imagine what might have happened if, instead of editing the Fathers and opposing every liberal measure in

Church and State, Newman and Pusey had made terms with the historic sense of Arnold, the wide Christian charity of Stanley, the religious insight of Robertson. It is, of course, a mere dream. But is it possible that the Tractarians might have so liberalised their basis as to include men like M. Loisy on the one side and men like Mr Booth on the other? Could they have claimed back for us those parts of our birthright which the Reformers threw away; and at the same time made war on the notion that Christianity can only be received on the condition of accepting a number of obsolete views in physical science, in psychology, and in history?

However that be, it seems that against the narrower section of those who are so oddly called "advanced" Churchmen we may bring the charge of confining their sympathies to the pre-Reformation Church, and overlooking on the one side the vast enlargement of the spiritual horizon which has taken place amid the struggles and discoveries of recent centuries,

and on the other side some of the most important facts of religion in our own country. Let me give but one or two examples.

Some able Anglicans are in the habit of speaking as if the one hope of the future lay in re-establishing the outward unity of the Church. But it must surely be evident to everyone whose eyes are not blinded that at present the unity of the Church can mean for us only one thing, an entire surrender to Rome, and the giving up of all the purposes and hopes which have governed the life and the death of our ancestors for three centuries and a half. It is no doubt an excellent thing to preach greater charity and friendliness towards the members of other branches of the Church than our own; but to talk of external unity is like talking of the "parliament of man, the federation of the world," which will not come in our time, nor in our children's time.

Another matter in which I think that High Churchmen have not taken the best course is

in relation to the keeping of Sunday. Their sympathies have been so much absorbed by ancient times and other countries, that they have not realised the enormous value to English Christianity of a somewhat strict observance of Sunday as a day of rest and religious observance. They have not resisted with all their strength that progressive secularisation of Sunday which is now in full progress, and which must in time do more to dwarf and hinder the spiritual life of the country than we can yet imagine. The Church tradition has been in this matter made by the High Church party of more account than the facts of the society around us.

In recent years, though the extreme ecclesiastical party in the English Church has increased among the clergy, it has exhibited disturbing phenomena. Its strength no longer lies in the older Universities, but in the Theological Colleges, and thus there has arisen the danger that the clergy may drift in one direction and the laity in another, and the Church may become as hostile to the State as

it is in France. As yet the danger is remote, but it exists.[1]

It ought to be possible to combine an appreciation of what is good in the High Church movement with liberal views in psychology and history. Whether any breadth of culture and belief is possible in the Roman Church may well be doubted. In the past the Roman Church has not closely scanned the views of laymen unless they were rebellious, but certainly she has always insisted on dictating the beliefs of the clergy. It is scarcely possible to imagine a change in this respect. But in the Anglican Church our liberty may help us in the consideration of history as in that of doctrine. While we acknowledge the inspiration of the Christian Church, we may deny its infallibility. While we see that on the whole it has remained the light of the world, we may allow that the light has often been dim, and sometimes has sadly needed a

[1] It is decidedly less remote than when these words were written, five years ago.

reviving, which has usually at such times been near at hand. Our membership of the Church commits us as does our membership of a nation. As Englishmen we are bound to feel that an "increasing purpose" runs through the struggles and sorrows of our ancestors; but we are not bound to hold that all our kings have been virtuous or all our statesmen wise. The same principle holds in the history of the Christian Church. Councils and Popes alike have erred through want of knowledge and of wisdom, and taken steps which their followers have had to retrace, or will have to retrace in the future. Yet, upon the whole, we may see an "increasing purpose" running through the history of Christianity. We do not find in the history of the world anywhere perfect light or utter darkness, but upon the whole the Church has stood in the light, except at those crises when a thorough reformation had become an absolute necessity.

To say this is not to deny the special and

unique mission of the Christian Church. Each nation also has a mission, and so, for that matter, has every individual. Of Church, nation, individual, there is a type laid up in heaven, to which the earthly realisation is bound to try to approach; and by approaching or receding from the Divine ideal, each fulfils or else thwarts the will of the Father in Heaven.

But the idea of the Christian Church belongs not to a nation, but to all mankind. For us, Clement of Alexandria gathered into the Church the fruits of Greek wisdom; for us, Augustine brought to bear on the individual life the theology of St Paul; for us, Hildebrand and Becket maintained in the face of kings and nobles that the spiritual life is the highest concern of man; for us, Francis revived the Galilean Gospel of the poor; for us, Thomas Aquinas stated the principles of Christianity in the terms of the Aristotelian wisdom. We need not blindly admire any of these great Christian workers; but we feel that without

them our daily life would be meaner and poorer.

We take, then, four points of the charter of Anglicanism to be (1) freedom, (2) nationality, (3) acceptance of the facts of the spiritual life, (4) adherence to the main stream of Church history. And it is quite possible, with the acceptance of each of these four points, to combine a broad culture which values the intellectual and spiritual legacies of Greece and Rome, as well as those of Judæa, and is willing to accept all fresh light from the researches of modern historians and men of science, as well as the spiritual teachings of the Founder of Christianity and His followers. And to me it seems to depend on the activity of liberal Churchmen whether the Anglican Church follows the Roman Church into a position of hostility to liberal thought from which there is no retreat, or whether she makes such terms with that thought as shall secure her a new and a hopeful lease of life.

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